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**CARREADER**

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**CARReader is a publication of the  
Connecticut Association for Reading Research**

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## **CARR Goals**

### **Professional Development**

To enhance and improve the professional development of reading and language arts educators in Connecticut

### **Advocacy**

To provide leadership in support of research, policy, and practice that improves reading instruction and supports the best interests of all learners and reading professionals

### **Partnerships**

To form partnerships with other organizations including universities and local agencies that share our goal of promoting literacy

### **Research**

To encourage and support research at all levels of reading and language arts education to promote informed decision making by reading professionals, policymakers, and the public

### **Global Literacy Development**

To identify and support leadership and significant state, national, and international issues



## About the Publication

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### **Managing Editor**

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### ***CARReader* Call for Manuscripts**

We invite all those interested in literacy research to submit articles for publication. We request scholarly articles, grounded in theory and research that are of interest to both researchers and teachers. We invite a wide range of submissions focusing on critical issues, current research and/or instructional strategies as they relate to literacy issues on the national level and the state of Connecticut.

- reviews of the literature
- graduate /field studies
- thesis statement
- action research
- position statements

The *CARReader* is a juried publication that is published once a year in the fall. Its contents do not necessarily reflect or imply advocacy or endorsement by CARR, its officers, or members. Inquiries and submissions should be directed to the *CARReader*, Judith Stone Moeller, Seymour Public Schools, Language Arts Consultant, Anna LoPresti Elementary School, Seymour, Ct. or sending an email to [judystone55@aol.com](mailto:judystone55@aol.com)

### **Guidelines for Publication**

Publications are limited to 2800 words or fewer and must include a title, author, statement of purpose, review of the literature, methodology, summary of findings, discussion and/or recommendations, conclusions, and references. Manuscripts should be typed double-spaced with ample margins for reviewer comments. All manuscripts should be formatted using APA 5th edition. The author needs to submit both a hard copy manuscript and a diskette copy (or e-mail version) compatible with Microsoft Word 2000. To be considered for the Fall 2011 volume, the manuscript must be submitted for review before June 1, 2011.

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This year the key mantra as professional teachers, specialists, and administrators is that “All Children Can and Will Learn Well!” We are learning to use our data to inform our instructional practices. Connecticut’s Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) keeps our focus on using research based interventions and strategies within our teaching,

Our 21st Century instruction requires teachers to work more collaboratively than ever before. We need to work smarter not harder! Working within a professional learning community allows us to link our inquiry studies in order to provide a more rigorous literacy education to our students within a classroom setting. Action research (also called teacher research) follows an inquiry model and is compatible to social cultural theories of learning discussed by Vygotsky (needs a reference) and other constructionist theorists that help shape our teaching; however Learning Preferences of students also need to be considered when we plan engaging in instruction that is research based.

Response to Intervention / Scientific Research Based Intervention (RtI/SRBI) will constantly be reviewed and should be so that we as professionals continue our dialogues within our Data Teams to tighten up our instructional practices. Tightening up and keeping our instruction laser focused on the needs of the students allow for more authentic writing and reading to be taken place that best improves the students’ learning. Effective Learning instruction (Marzano, 2009) should be based on the literacy research that is available to all of us through the International Reading Association, Connecticut Reading Association, and Connecticut Association for Reading Research. Just As we choose mentor text from authors that best exemplify through their writing comprehension strategies to teach or author’s craft to model to our students, teachers and administrators have instructional best practice leaders within their field that help guide instruction. We are all focused on the same goal- Impacting Student Learning!

The articles within this issue of the CARReader will engage you to want to learn more about the history of the RtI /SRBI model and how SRBI can be used as a successful intervention model within your school. I want to thank Melisa Peitro for providing a thorough study on the SRBI history and process along with how it can be used successfully within classrooms!

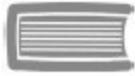
With Comprehension at the forefront of our instruction, Laura J. Meade, Karen Burke, Dr. Lois Lanning, Jennifer F. Mitchell wrote a wonderful article on explicit strategy instruction. They tied in how learning preferences affect a student’s learning coupled with four comprehension strategies that can be used for our struggling readers! The authors provide a thorough overview of the current research and study.

Dr. Julie Coiro presented at our CARR March meeting last year and has graciously written “Top Ten Tips for Teachers” that will help instruction move forward by tying 21st Century Technology skills to our lessons. Dr. Coiro has also provided us the research that supported her wonderful instructional strategies for teachers. She is a leader in the area of 21st Century learning incorporating technology within the classroom!

With the new Connecticut Social Studies and Science standards along with the Language Arts Core Standards 2010 currently being rolled out within our schools along ,the increasing number of English Language Learners, and children with various learning needs within our classrooms, the research provided for you will help guide your Data Teams and best practice instruction within the classrooms!

Our hope is that you will not only enjoy reading the studies as much as we have, but also be encouraged to engage in your own action research that you can share with other CARR members!

*Judith Stone Moeller*



## President's Message

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### Judith Stone Moeller

It is an honor to be president of the Connecticut Association for Reading Research. We are in an era of Global Literacy that has shifted our paradigms not only within our schools but also within our classrooms! As Reading professionals and administrators we rely on the current research as we read IRA journals, *The Reading Teacher*, *Reading Today*, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, and *Reading Research Quarterly*; *District Administration*, CARR's journal, *CARReader*; and other journals that investigate the ways we can successfully instruct our students using best practices. Global Literacy is causing us to really step back to reflect upon how does the students read across the globe.

Our International Reading Association President, Dr. Patricia Edwards, in a current President's Message published in *Reading Today* 2010 pushes us to really think: How does the world read? As teachers of reading that goes across the content areas, we need to redefine what reading is now and what we expect from all of our students. We need to re-think how we organize our classrooms to engage students in conversations. Think about how we schedule how learning literacy and how we collaborate with our colleagues and team members; include the ELL teacher, Special Education teacher, Language Arts Consultant, Behavioral specialist. We need to work as a collaborative team to orchestrate the optimal learning that will highly engage various learning styles in our classroom.

In order for our students to be successful, productive members of our global society we really need to think about how we are going to integrate learning and set high expectations for all students to apply strategies and skills needed to be successful. We are helping create the new scientists, educators, lawyers, engineers, doctors, plumbers, electricians, and authors!

The CARR Board wishes to extend our appreciation for all the Connecticut schools who entered the first CARR Poetry Slam Contest. We were happy to announce the six winners chosen. We looked at three key categories when scoring their poetry: organization and overall impact; elements of Poetry and Grammar; usage, mechanics and spelling.

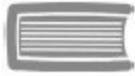
Congratulations to all who participated! We look forward to CARR's 2<sup>nd</sup> Poetry Slam Contest in the spring. We hope you will enjoy reading the author's poems as much as we did!

CARR is very fortunate to have Dr. Patricia Edwards come to speak at our October 7<sup>th</sup> CARR meeting at the Hawthorne Inn, Berlin, CT. We are also honored to have Dr. Lois Lanning speaking on The 4 Reading Comprehension Strategies that can be successfully used with our struggling readers.

CARR and CRA have collaborated to have a wonderful Literacy Series over this next year! Thank you Betsy and Diana Sisson and Sandy Magnan, President of CRA for organizing these speakers and venues!! More information will be shared on the CRA website and Connecticut Association for Reading Research Facebook page!

If you have not joined CARR yet, I really encourage you to do so! I look forward to serving you this year as President. If you would like to contact me with questions or ideas, please email: [judyStone55@aol.com](mailto:judyStone55@aol.com)

*Judith Stone Moeller*



## **The Pearson Bequest**

What does Connecticut Association for Reading Research as an organization mean to you? That response will vary by the individual. In 2005, the CARR Board was pleasantly surprised to learn that our organization had been named as a beneficiary in the Legal Will of a past member, Beverly Pearson of Newington.

The money she left us represents an opportunity for CARR to better support the purpose of funding research and scholarships in the field of literacy. What is remarkable about this gift from Ms. Pearson is that she was never a CARR Board member or otherwise active in CARR, that we have been able to determine. She must though have held our organization's stated mission in high regard. We are thankful that she has entrusted us with this generous bequest and would like to share what meager information we have been able to learn about our benefactress.

Beverly Pearson graduated from the University of Maine in 1950 with a B.A. in English. She later earned her M.Ed. in Reading from the University of Hartford in 1964. Her earlier teaching career began in several Maine school systems, most specifically at Jonesport and Cape Elizabeth High Schools in those respective communities. After coming to Connecticut, she taught at Branford High School. For a considerable part of her career, she served at the Windsor High School as a Reading Specialist. She was with the Windsor Schools from 1970-1992, when she retired. She maintained her CARR membership for some years after retiring. It was not until the settling of her estate in 2005, however, we learned of her generosity to our organization.

Perhaps there is someone in Connecticut or Maine now reading about this, who knew Ms. Pearson and can fill in some gaps for us. We are so thankful for the confidence she had in the CARR organization to so gift us and would welcome any further information from anyone that might have known her.

*Marge Hubbard*

*CARR Board Member*



## Response to Intervention: An Instructional Model for Student Success

**Melissa Petro**  
**University of Bridgeport**

### Abstract

This article describes Response to Intervention (RTI) and Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI). These are two intervention models of reaching out to students who need extra learning or behavioral support. This article focuses on RTI and SRBI as they apply to reading. Although these models of intervention are not new to education, there is not one specific process that has been found to guarantee success. The article explores SRBI in the following areas: definition, history, roles of staff, benefits, challenges, and best practices. Feedback from educational professionals in the field, and in Connecticut, is included. The most effective approach to RTI and SRBI will become evident after thorough examination and assessment of practices already in place in Connecticut and nationwide.

### Response to Intervention: An Instructional Model for Student Success

Nationwide, many school districts have adopted a Response to Intervention (RTI, also RtI) model to detect and prevent early reading failure. RTI is a tiered system that provides interventions based on scientific, research-based data. All students receive instruction in the general education classroom. If they do not respond to this instruction, they begin a tiered process of increasingly individualized interventions and assessments administered by the classroom teacher and related specialists. The timeline of this process varies from child to child. Tier I requires benchmark assessments at least three times per year. If it is determined that the student is not responding to Tier I interventions, the student will progress to Tier II interventions. These interventions require at least monthly progress

monitoring. Again, if the student does not respond to Tier II interventions, the student will progress to Tier III where the student will receive at least weekly progress monitoring and frequent informal classroom-based assessments (Burns & Coolong-Chaffin, 2006, p. 4). Ultimately, the child either responds to the interventions provided at one of the tiers or, once all other possibilities are ruled out, s/he may be referred to special education. The RTI process can be applied to any subject area, including behavior, but reading is the focus of this article.

RTI is not a new concept, but it was recently brought back to the educational forefront when revisions were made to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004. These revisions banned a model that searched for a severe discrepancy between intelligence (possibly measured by IQ test) and performance on achievement tests in order to determine special education eligibility. When the IQ discrepancy model was banned, RTI was named as the new way to identify students with learning disabilities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005, p. 57). Based on a student's progress through the tiers of the RTI model, it may be concluded that the students need a more comprehensive evaluation, which may lead to identification of a learning disability and consequent special education status (Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2009, p. 85). The state of Connecticut's RTI model is called Scientific, Research-Based Intervention (SRBI). Although some districts have been using SRBI for years, and many committees exist to see that it is implemented efficiently, there are still many gray areas and areas that need further exploration. These gray areas include: defining SRBI, the history of SRBI, roles of staff providing SRBI, benefits of SRBI, challenges of SRBI, and best practices in SRBI.



## Connecticut's Approach Scientific, Research-Based Intervention (SRBI)

To best suit the needs of the student population, each state takes a different approach to education. Likewise, each state tailors its implementation of RTI specifically to the needs of the students being taught. The following section will focus on RTI as it applies to the state of Connecticut. The information in this section is taken from The CSDE's Bureau of School and District Improvement's *Using SRBI: Improving Education for all Students, Connecticut's Framework for RTI* (2008).

### Defining SRBI

Connecticut decided that its RTI program would be called SRBI, or Scientific Research-Based Interventions,

“because the language is contained in both NCLB and IDEA regulations. The use of the name SRBI, in place of RTI, is intended to emphasize the centrality of general education and the importance of using interventions that are scientific and research-based” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 4).

There are ten main principles and features of SRBI in Connecticut. According to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), they are as follows:

1. The assumption that scientific research should be used to inform educational practice as much as possible.
2. A belief in collective responsibility, accountability and the power of education.
3. A willingness to be transparent with a relentless focus on continuous improvement.
4. A focus on prevention and early intervention.
5. School-wide or district-wide high-quality

core curricula, instruction and comprehensive social/behavioral supports.

6. Monitoring fidelity of implementation.
7. Culturally responsive teaching.
8. A comprehensive assessment plan with universal common assessments and progress monitoring.
9. Data analysis, not just data collection.
10. Data-driven decision making with clear decision rules (CSDE, 2008a, p.15-21).

These principles and features are consistent with the universal RTI model. The main difference is an additional focus on school climate as a part of Connecticut's model of SRBI.

Connecticut's SRBI model includes school climate as an integral part of learning achievement. The School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS)

“includes a proactive, comprehensive and systemic continuum of support designed to provide opportunities to all students, including those with disabilities, to achieve social and learning success” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 7).

SWPBS in Connecticut is partially supported by the State Education Research Center's (SERC) Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Initiative (CSDE, 2008a, p. 7). It is intended to “improve the overall school climate, maximize achievement for all students, and address the specific needs of students with severe behavioral difficulties” (CSDE, 2008, p. 7).

### History of SRBI

The SRBI Advisory Panel, appointed in November 2006 “to review current research and practice on RTI to develop a framework for implementation in school districts across the state” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 4), created Connecticut's definition of RTI. The panel's specific goals were to establish a definition of SRBI and to “provide guidance to school district personnel on best

practices in developing interventions for students experiencing learning or behavioral difficulties” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 4). The members of this panel were appointed by the Commissioner of Education and involved a variety of representatives from classroom teachers to representatives from the CDSE, Regional Educational Service Centers (RESC), and SERC.

The SRBI Advisory Panel met approximately monthly from November 2006 to June 2007 (CSDE, 2008a, p. 4). Throughout these meetings the panel produced two documents that are critical to implementing SRBI in CT: *February 2008 Executive Summary* and *August 2008 Framework for RTI*. Both of these documents are also titled *Using SRBI: Improving Education for All Students* and are credited to the Connecticut State Department of Education’s Bureau of School and District Improvement. These documents serve as the manual for SRBI implementation in Connecticut.

## **Roles of Staff**

### *Administrators*

Experience is the best way to determine how SRBI can best be implemented. Administrators must make decisions as to reallocation of existing resources, adding new resources, goal setting, and prioritizing the various aspects of SRBI (CSDE, 2008a, p. 48). This is easy to say, but requires a lot of time and effort to accomplish. District administrators must work diligently and cooperatively to determine specific district needs and direct staff toward successful SRBI programs.

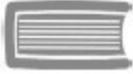
At the school level, it is up to the administrator to create the school climate. The school administrator collaborates with other district administrators to decide how SRBI and PBS will be implemented. The school administrator then relays this information to the staff and ensures that the SRBI and PBS models are implemented consistently and with fidelity. “The leadership of the principal is critical to the success of SRBI. The principal communicates the

vision, beliefs and attitudes required for SRBI to the school and school community, including families” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 48). In addition to high-quality curricula and academic benchmarks, school-wide social-emotional and behavioral supports must be made available to classroom teachers and their students (CSDE, 2008a, p. 24). The school principal is usually also part of the district data team, as well as the school data team. The district data team analyzes data across schools within a district. The school data team analyzes benchmark data within a school “to establish the overall efficacy of curricula, instruction, school climate and system of social-emotional learning and behavioral supports for all students, and monitors fidelity of implementation” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 33). In general, this team should meet at least quarterly (CSDE, 2008a, p. 30).

### *General education teachers*

Many aspects of SRBI take place in all classrooms on a daily basis. These include: frequent assessment, differentiated instruction, successful classroom management techniques, and collaborative teams. General education teachers are responsible for Tier I interventions. Tier I interventions include implementing the curriculum with fidelity and differentiation of instruction in the classroom. It also includes assessing all students, with a universal common assessment, at least three times per year to collect “benchmark” data. It may also entail data analysis with a grade-level or content area data team.

As in RTI, general education teachers may be responsible for Tier II interventions as well. This would consist of short-term (8-20 weeks) interventions delivered to small, homogeneous groups (of 4-6 students). These interventions would be based on students’ needs. At Tier II, frequent progress monitoring is required (weekly or biweekly) using assessment tools that are more focused on the students’ area for improvement. The data analysis and decision making is done with teacher support/intervention teams that



may overlap with Tier I data teams” and “should include core team members (e.g., school principal, general educators, reading/language arts consultant, school psychologist and a special educator) (CSDE, 2008a, p. 40).

#### *Special education teachers*

Special education teachers are to be available to support classroom teachers implementing SRBI. “Teachers should consult with colleagues and with relevant specialists...the consultation can occur on a one-to-one basis, or at grade-level team or department meetings” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 27). Special educators are also responsible for Tier III interventions including short-term (8-20 weeks) interventions that are individualized and focus on students’ specific academic and behavioral needs (CSDE, 2008a, p. 43). These interventions are “delivered to homogeneous groups...with a teacher: student ratio of up to 1:3” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 43). In Tier III, progress monitoring occurs very frequently, possibly twice per week, using common formative assessments, similar to those used in Tier II. The special education teacher is part of the teacher support/intervention team. This team serves for Tier II and Tier III and decides how to “choose, individualize, and intensify interventions for students...select appropriate monitoring tools; analyze progress monitoring data; modify...interventions as needed; identify students not responding to Tier III efforts” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 43).

#### **Benefits of SRBI**

There are many benefits to SRBI. Connecticut’s goal is to “do more than enable schools to meet the challenges of NCLB and IDEA 2004; SRBI can revolutionize how schools do business and provide a comprehensive, high-quality system of education for all students” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 11). The CSDE’s goals include the following:

Research-based general education curriculums; differentiation of instruction; maintaining a physically, social-emotionally, and intellectually safe and respected climate; a comprehensive system of social-emotional learning and behavior supports; and data-driven decision making. (CSDE, 2008a, p. 11)

This will be beneficial for general and special education. Timely interventions should coincide with student’s needs, making certain that students with disabilities are correctly identified. This will ensure that special education services are only provided to students who actually require them.

#### **Challenges of SRBI**

Districts will find the implementation of SRBI to be challenging. It will require “analyzing existing district resources, reallocating resources as necessary, developing additional resources, establishing priorities” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 48). One suggested reallocation of resources is that “district and school administrators must schedule adequate common time for teachers to plan and collaborate in teams, without sacrificing instructional time” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 49). With conflicting ideas and strained budgets, this will be a puzzle, but it is one that can be solved with perseverance and cooperation between involved administrators and staff. Greater statewide challenges include “large and longstanding disparities in achievement within the state based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 1). SRBI should directly address this given that curriculum must be relevant, and students’ academic success must not suffer due to any of the previously mentioned traits.

#### **Best Practices in SRBI**

The state of Connecticut follows a three-tiered model of SRBI. However,

the tiers should not be viewed as ‘gates’ to special education. Most students undergoing tiered interventions will not have disabilities and, if interventions are appropriately selected and implemented with fidelity, then most students should not require special education services (CSDE, 2008a, p. 23).

SRBI apply to all academic domains beginning at the preschool level.

Central to the three tiered model are “benchmarks,” or “student outcomes, which are reasonable for students to achieve by the end of the school year” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 24). These benchmarks should be defined by the school district. They should be aligned with standards and referenced frequently by teachers (CSDE, 2008a, p. 24). In Connecticut, these standards are detailed in *Connecticut’s Blueprint for Reading Achievement* (2000) and *Beyond the Blueprint: Literacy in Grades 4-12 and Across the Content Areas* (2007).

Highly qualified teachers are crucial to the success of the SRBI model. If any step of the process is weak, the SRBI model will fail. If necessary, additional training may be required for some interventionists. This training should include pre-service preparation and ongoing professional development. This professional development must include frequent in-service programs in areas that are relevant to students’ needs. These programs should also contribute to an atmosphere of collaborative learning teams within schools.

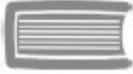
Tier I interventions take place in the general education classroom. The instruction should be research-based and aligned with state standards. It should be culturally appropriate. Tier I interventions also rely on a positive school climate and social emotional/behavioral supports (CSDE, 2008a, p. 33). The interventions consist of differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction refers to instruction that will reach all learners regardless of, and with attention to, readiness and ability. This could include flexible

small groups and materials that are congruent with students’ needs. For example, teachers may take a small group of students aside to focus more on phonemic awareness or fluency. In order to effectively differentiate instruction, teachers must have access to appropriate materials (CSDE, 2008a, p. 26). Teachers must assess all students to gather benchmark data. “Most authorities recommend the use of curriculum-based measures (CBMs) to establish benchmarks and monitor student progress in Tier I (CSDE, 2008a, p. 27). Specific benchmark goals are outlined in *CT’s Framework for RTI* (2008). According to the CSDE, Tier I assessments are the following:

Universal common assessments of all students at least three times per year (benchmark data) to monitor progress and identify students in need of intervention early; common formative assessments to guide and differentiate instruction; data to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the behavioral system (CSDE, 2008a, p. 33).

District, school, and grade/content area data teams analyze this data.

Tier II interventions apply to students who do not respond to Tier I interventions. Tier II interventions are short-term (30-45 minutes per session, 3-4 times per week for 8-20 weeks) and are the responsibility of the general education teacher supported by specialists, but may also be provided by “specialized teachers, or other interventionists specifically trained for Tier II supplemental instruction” (CSDE, 2008a, p. 34). For example, at one school in Waterbury, CT, where all of the district’s resources are being reallocated and put to use, high school and art substitute teachers provide all of the Tier II interventions (S. DaSilva, personal communication, April 10, 2010). Similarly, in Naugatuck, CT, there is a specific position for one professional who provides Tier II interventions to all of the school’s Tier II students (M. Boyce,



personal communication, March 22, 2010). This can be challenging because it requires an additional step: communication. If the classroom teacher is not the one providing the interventions, s/he must be informed of the student's progress in order to report to data teams and to inform classroom instruction.

Tier II interventions occur in addition to regular classroom instruction. Progress monitoring should occur weekly or biweekly. Examples of progress monitoring tools include AIMSweb and DIBELS testing (NCRTI 2010). Due to the fact that this progress monitoring occurs so frequently, assessments need to be "relatively quick, in order not to consume an inordinate proportion of the intervention time" (CSDE, 2008a, p. 35). Similar teams analyze this data. The teams also make changes to the learning plan as needed, identify non-responders, analyze and apply data from Tier II interventions to determine what effect the interventions are having, and monitor fidelity of implementation. A long-range goal, such as meeting an academic benchmark or standard, should be set for each student. This goal, in addition to an individualized intervention plan, must be written for each student receiving Tier II interventions.

Tier III interventions may be provided by the appropriately trained general education teacher, but will most likely be administered by a specialist or other trained interventionist. Tier III interventions resemble those of Tier II in that they are short term, in addition to classroom instruction, and are provided by general educators. Tier III progress monitoring is similar to that which is used in Tier II, but is administered at least weekly (Burns & Coolong-Chaffin, 2006, p. 4). The data team is the same as in Tier II, but may need to use the data collected to "inform the design of a comprehensive evaluation for the determination of a learning disability" (CSDE, 2008a, p. 42). However, "it must be emphasized that special education is not merely the 'end point' of failure to respond to various tiers of intervention" (CSDE, 2008a, p. 44). As per the CSDE:

Connecticut State Regulations provide for the 'prompt referral to a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) of all children who have been suspended repeatedly or whose behavior, attendance or progress in school is considered unsatisfactory or at a marginal level of acceptance (CSDE, 2008a, p. 44).

The SRBI process does not change this practice. The parent or guardian is also a member of the Planning and Placement Team (PPT).

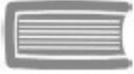
### **Conclusion**

Since RTI and SRBI models are becoming widespread in Connecticut and many other states, it is important that all involved professionals are properly trained in intervention practices prior to implementing them with students. The process begins at the pre-service level. Teacher educators must include information about RTI/SRBI in undergraduate and graduate level courses. Once teachers begin their careers, it is crucial that they be provided with frequent professional development opportunities that strengthen the teachers' understanding of RTI/SRBI and ability to implement it. District administrators are assigned the daunting task of allocating and reallocating resources to make sure that a high quality educator is instructing each student. This educator is responsible for using a relevant, research-based curriculum, administering frequent progress monitoring, and using the data collected to drive instruction. Teamwork is essential. Administrators, general educators, special educators, specialists, parents, and students must all commit to the RTI/SRBI process in order for the intervention, and the student, to succeed.

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## **Ten Top Reasons to Become a Member of Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR)**

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## Explicit Strategy Instruction, Learning-Style Preferences, and Reading Comprehension of Struggling Readers

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### Abstract

This study examined the impact of the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies (self-regulating, creating meaningful connections, summarizing, and inferring) on comprehension and self-perception of struggling readers. The study also observed the relationship between the intervention and learning-style processing preferences.

The experimental research design utilized random assignment to group and used quantitative measures to explore the research questions. The 63 participants were identified as struggling readers at one elementary school in an urban school district.

There was a non-significant main effect for each dependent variable. The analyses also indicated no significant interaction between the two levels of the independent variable and students' processing preference in relation to either dependent variable. Although no significant effects were realized, the experimental group performed as well as the control group on the cognitive measure. The significance of this finding supports the effectiveness of a newly implemented intervention for all types of learners. In light of SRBI and differentiation of instruction the findings support an effective intervention for global learners as well as analytic learners.

### Introduction

Research consistently indicates that children who initially succeed in reading rarely regress. Those who fall behind tend to stay behind for the rest of their academic lives (Buly & Valencia, 2002; Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999; Juel, 1988; Valencia & Buly, 2004). "According to the

National Assessment of Educational Progress (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), 36% of fourth graders read below the basic level" (Torgesen et al., 2007, p.vii). There is a distinct need to provide explicit reading interventions to meet the needs of these struggling readers.

In the field of education the teaching of reading has been a subject of heated debate for decades. There has been little agreement with regard to the best approach to reading instruction. One theory proclaims a skills-based approach that emphasizes phonemic instruction will produce the best readers. Another theory argues that the only way students learn how to read is through a literature-based approach that has been associated with whole language. Recent literature has suggested that there can be a compromise between these two schools of thought (Baumann & Ivey, 1997; California Department of Education, 1996; Carbo, 2003; Frey, Lee, Tollefson, Pass, & Massengill, 2005; Honig, 1996; Pressley, 2006).

When the teaching of reading and writing is viewed in a holistic manner, the idea of balanced literacy instruction emerges. *Balanced literacy* is a comprehensive literacy approach that is not confined to a particular philosophy. Several of the components include but are not limited to reading and writing workshop, interactive reading and writing, read-alouds, accountable talk, and small group instruction. "It is an approach that requires and frees a teacher to be a reflective decision maker and to fine tune and modify what he or she is doing each day in order to meet the needs of each child" (Spiegel, 1998, p. 116). In addition to creating a model with an aspect of balanced components, a balance must be maintained between teacher-directed and learner-directed instruction, explicit and indirect instruction, whole group and small group interactions, and between



authentic assessment, high-stakes assessment, and norm-referenced assessment (Au et al., 1997; Spiegel, 1998).

Balanced literacy instruction incorporates the various teaching strategies for skills and comprehension to best meet the needs of individual students. This literacy model permits the flexibility of instruction to address individual learning styles (Baumann & Ivey, 1997; Carbo, 2003). Varied instructional methods, grouping, and activities can better support all learning-style preferences (Dunn, Dunn, & Perrin, 1994). One of the most challenging aspects of balanced literacy is structuring an optimal 150-minute daily literacy block that is fluid and meaningful while incorporating each component effectively in a timely manner (Au, Carroll, & Scheu, 1997).

Struggling readers need more explicit instruction from a knowledgeable teacher to break through the cycle of reading failure. The *4 powerful strategies for struggling readers grades 3-8: Small group instruction that improves comprehension* specifically target the following four comprehension strategies used in this investigation: self-regulation, creating meaningful connections, summarizing, and inferring (Lanning, 2009). Allington (2001) espouses to improve reading skills students must read extensively and frequently. The theory of self-efficacy and related studies indicate that with increased academic failures a student's self-perception rapidly declines (Bandura 1977, 1997; Henk & Melnick, 1995; Schunk, 1984).

The review of research revealed a need for further empirical research to specifically address the comprehension deficits and self-perception of struggling readers in intermediate grades. Research also posited the necessity for alignment between student learning-style preferences and instructional methods. The contention of this research was to determine if the Four Powerful Strategies implemented through the gradual release lesson design (Duke & Pearson, 2002) had the potential to increase reading comprehension, address processing-style differences, and enhance students' self-perception.

## Method

This study examined the impact of the two levels of the independent variable, reading comprehension intervention instruction, (Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies/experimental group and no Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies/control group), on the two dependent variables, reading comprehension and reader self-perception of struggling readers in grades 3, 4, and 5. The moderator variable was learning-style processing preference (analytic or global).

## Description of the Setting and the Subjects

Research was conducted at an urban school district in the northeast region of the United States. According to the US Bureau of the Census (2000), the socioeconomic background of the city's population was low to middle class with a median home income of \$53,664. The participating school was one of the most socio-economically-challenged elementary schools in the district with 64% of the total student population eligible for free and reduced lunch. According to the 2007-2008 Strategic School Profile there was a total minority population of 69% and 58% of the total school population lived in homes where English was not the primary language. One full-time bilingual teacher and one full-time English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher provided services to 36% of the total student population ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade.

The target population was a group of students identified as struggling readers in grades 3, 4, and 5. The total population of struggling readers identified from one elementary school in the district comprised the 63 student participants in this sample. There were 11 staff members who participated in the study. Four staff members (three certified teachers and one instructional aide) were trained in the implementation of the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies and the gradual release lesson design during two six-hour training sessions and monthly follow up

professional development sessions throughout the course of the research. The four trained staff members provided instruction for the experimental group of students. Seven staff members (six certified teachers and one instructional aide) were not trained in the implementation of the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies or the gradual release lesson design and conducted traditional small group instructional practices for the control group students.

### **Procedure**

The researcher provided the four treatment instructors with two six-hour training sessions. The training included a copy of the book *4 powerful strategies for struggling readers grades 3-8: Small group instruction that improves comprehension* (Lanning, 2009), a comprehensive resource binder, activities to review current research on strategy instruction and theoretical background related to the intervention, step-by-step process of the gradual release lesson design, and practice evaluating the teaching of the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies using a gradual release lesson design. At the conclusion of each training session the participants provided feedback used to modify future professional development sessions for the entire group, small groups, and individuals. Follow-up professional development occurred at least monthly for the duration of the treatment.

The Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies identifies the following four essential comprehension strategies: summarizing, creating meaningful connections, self-regulating, and inferring. Each strategy has an accompanying set of supporting skills, which often overlap (Lanning, 2009). The *gradual release lesson design* delineates Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) *gradual release of responsibility model* into a step-by-step process in which teachers are able to plan deliberate instruction at each phase of the release.

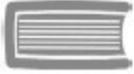
In this process the teacher will:

1. Give an explicit description of the strategy and when it should be used;
2. Model the strategy in action;
3. Collaboratively use the strategy in action;
4. Guide practice using the strategy with gradual release of responsibility; and
5. Allow the student independent use of the strategy (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

Trained teachers implemented the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies for 30 minutes a day, 4 times a week for 14 weeks. To ensure accurate implementation, the researcher monitored lessons using a tailored observation form (Lanning, 2009, pp. 143-148), provided written feedback, and conferred with each treatment teacher throughout the 14 weeks. Each teacher provided instruction for all four strategies and several skills over the course of the study. To track the strategies and skills covered, the teachers in the experimental group used the matrix from *4 Powerful Strategies for Struggling Readers Grades 3-8: Small Group Instruction that Improves Comprehension* (Lanning, 2009, p. 8). The course of instruction and the order in which the strategies were taught varied from teacher to teacher based upon student need in each group.

Conversely, the focus for the control group students varied between each instructional group and the gradual release lesson design was not utilized as the method of instruction. However, students in the control group were exposed to similar conditions; small-group instruction that occurred 30 minutes daily, 4 times a week for the same 14 weeks. Staff members who taught students in the control group were familiar with the materials and knowledgeable of the methods of instruction. Materials ranged from a variety of trade books to leveled commercial resources. Instruction for control group students was predominantly teacher-directed utilizing a call-and-response method and isolated skills instruction.

Research touts explicit instruction and guided practice as the most effective methods to



ensure comprehension (Duffy et al., 1987; Duke & Pearson, 2002, Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Each lesson conducted using the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies intervention was predicated on the gradual release lesson design (Duke & Pearson, 2002). The design included explicit explanation and teaching of the strategy and underlying skill along with guided practice that allowed greater student responsibility. Guided practice provided the critical step to ensure appropriate use of each of the four strategies and the integration of strategies; the teacher provided corrective action and appropriate scaffolding techniques when observing students using each strategy in the small group. Students and teachers must be confident in their respective roles to best promote transfer of learning to a new situation (Bigge & Shermis, 2004).

Finally, data for the cognitive measure were collected using the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* (MacGinitie, MacGinitie, Maria, & Dreyer, 2000) for the achievement measure. The *Reader Self-Perception Scale* (RSPS) (Henk & Melnick, 1995) was used for the affective measure. RSPS pretest scores were analyzed to determine that there were no initial differences between group means. The *Elementary Learning Style Assessment* (Dunn, Rundle, & Burke, 2007) was administered to all student participants to identify each student's learning-style processing preference (analytic and global) according to the Dunn and Dunn Learning-Styles Model.

### Learning-Style Processing Preference

This investigation was concerned with the psychological processing styles of global and analytic as determined by the *Elementary Learning Style Assessment*. A learner who prefers information presented in an anecdotal manner that initially imparts the "big picture" through stories that can be self-related characterizes the global processing style. Global learners generally prefer to work with a small group in an informal setting with low light. A learner who prefers a step-by-

step methodology with specific grading criteria and concise feedback, characterizes the analytic processing style. The analytic learner usually prefers to work alone in a formal setting with bright light. An integrated processing style indicates that a learner utilizes both types of reasoning (Burke, 2003).

### Description of the Research Design

The experimental research design utilized a stratified random assignment to form the two groups (experimental and control) and used quantitative measures to explore the research questions using an equivalent group design for both dependent variables. The independent variable was reading comprehension intervention instruction with two levels: (a) students who received instruction using the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies and (b) students who did not receive instruction using the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies. The moderator variable was learning-style processing preference. The two dependent variables were reading comprehension achievement and reader self-perception.

### Results

Two-way ANOVAs ( $p \leq .025$ ) were conducted to determine a main effect for group (experimental and control) for each dependent variable. Data also were analyzed to determine an interaction effect between the independent variable and processing-preference in relation to each of the dependent variables.

These statistical procedures determined there was a non-significant main effect between group means of the experimental group ( $M = 467.97$ ,  $SD = 26.19$ ) and the control group ( $M = 469.58$ ,  $SD = 25.44$ ) for reading comprehension  $F(1, 56) = .068$ ,  $p = .795$ ,  $\eta^2 = .001$ . Also, there was no significant difference between group means of the experimental group ( $M = 121.48$ ,  $SD = 16.18$ ) and the control group ( $M = 113.52$ ,  $SD =$

15.832) for the affective dependent variable (reader self-perception)  $F(1, 56) = 2.119, p = .151, \eta^2 = .036$ . In addition, the results indicated no significant interaction between the two independent variables in relation to either of the cognitive  $F(1, 50) = .012, p = .914, \eta^2 = .000$  or affective  $F(1, 56) = 2.119, p = .151, \eta^2 = .036$  variables. The statistic indicated that global or analytic learners did not perform differently when exposed to either the experimental or control

conditions. Although the analyses indicated no statistical significant differences, Table 1 and Table 2 show the mean scores for experimental students identified as having a global processing preference were higher than the experimental students identified as having an analytic processing preference for both the cognitive and affective measures. This finding illustrated the positive impact that the experimental intervention had on global learners.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Comprehension Extended Scale Scores

Group	Processing preference	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimental	Integrated	475.80	12.317	5
	Analytic	462.30	28.308	10
	Global	469.06	28.410	16
Control	Integrated	460.33	20.207	3
	Analytic	466.08	27.506	13
	Global	474.47	24.991	15

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Reader Self-Perception Scale Posttest Scores

Group	Processing preference	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimental	Integrated	123.60	12.462	5
	Analytic	114.40	17.646	10
	Global	125.25	15.652	16
Control	Integrated	115.00	27.495	3
	Analytic	113.31	15.440	13
	Global	113.40	14.975	15

## Discussion

The Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies (self-regulation, creating meaningful connections, summarizing, and inferring) used as an intervention exemplified the ideology of Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development and teaching for transfer (Bigge & Shermis, 2004; Marini & Genereux, 1995). This study supported the assertion that the explicit instruction of a few powerful comprehension strategies, in a gradual release lesson design, would promote transfer of strategy use to new learning situations. The results indicated that the experimental intervention was

equally effective for all learners and as effective as the alternative instructional methods.

## Implications

This study provided support for the implementation of the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies within a balanced literacy model as an effective intervention for students in grades 3, 4, and 5. The findings represented by the data showed no significant difference in mean scores, but suggested that students who received the Four Powerful



Comprehension Strategies performed as well as and in the case of integrated learners better on the cognitive measure than their control group counterparts. The findings also indicated the experimental conditions were equally effective for all processing preferences; experimental students identified with global and integrated processing preferences scored slightly higher than students identified with an analytic processing preference. This finding is of interest because a majority of elementary students exhibit a global learning style, but are frequently taught in an analytic manner. The data showed similar findings for the affective measure; global students in the experimental group scored the highest overall score on the *Reader Self-Perception Scale*.

### **Response to Intervention**

In light of Response to Intervention (RTI), districts nationwide are striving to provide staff with research-based interventions that are manageable to implement and cost-effective. All aspects of the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies are research based (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Lanning, 2009; Pressley, 2006). Professional development can be site-based utilizing resident experts in comprehension instruction. The parameters of the instruction (30 minutes a day, 4 times a week) coincide with RTI expectations. The Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies intervention is not curriculum specific and would complement individual district's curriculum, materials, and resources. The flexibility of the instruction allows teachers to engage students by choosing a variety of texts of high interest and motivation.

### **Strategy Instruction for All Texts**

The National Reading Panel (NICHHD, 2000) has suggested the need for strategy instruction that is effective for both narrative and expository texts. The strategies and skills presented in the Four Powerful Comprehension

Strategies are appropriate for either narrative or expository texts and a variety of genres. The National Reading Panel (NICHHD, 2000) also advocated for a variety of procedures to instruct educators in how to use effective comprehension strategies. The step-by-step process of the gradual release lesson design is a critical component for teaching comprehension. Also, it is imperative for teachers to have a comprehensive understanding of the terms strategy and skill. A *strategy* is a systematic plan consciously adapted and monitored to improve one's performance in learning (Harris & Hodges, 1995). A *skill* refers to the parts of acts that are primarily intellectual (Harris & Hodges, 1995). The gradual release lesson design and the discrete teaching of strategies and skills are the mainstay of the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies intervention.

### **Core Programs Versus Supplemental Support**

Dewitz, Jones and Leahy, (2009) informed schools and districts of significant gaps for a multitude of learners in commercially purchased core programs. Many schools use core programs as the sole vehicle for literacy instruction. However, in each of the reviewed core programs, strategy instruction was evaluated as having breadth but not depth. The core programs were viewed as particularly detrimental to struggling readers; over 51 disconnected skills and strategies were coded for five different programs, the terms strategy and skill were often used interchangeably, and there was little to no guided practice or release of responsibility to the student.

The Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies provides supplemental instruction to support struggling readers with explicit instruction using a variety of texts and genres. A noticeable overlap exists in each of the four strategies because comprehension is often attained through many of the same skill sets for the use of the various strategies. Therefore, it is critical for students to understand the difference between strategies and skills, when and how they are used, and that the same skills can be applied with a different focus

for each strategy. Lanning's (2009) book, *4 Powerful Strategies for Struggling Readers Grades 3-8: Small Group Instruction that Improves Comprehension*, provides distinct definitions for each term. The definitions of strategies and skills are supported and modeled throughout the book. In addition, the professional development sessions throughout this study continually emphasized the importance of the distinction between these two terms and how to effectively communicate the difference to students.

### **Implementation Dip**

A critical implication of which researchers and practitioners should be cognizant is the implementation dip of a new intervention. Michael Fullen described the implementation dip as "a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings" (2001, p. 124). There are two significant problems faced during a change such as learning a new instructional method: (a) the social-psychological fear of the change itself, and (b) not knowing how to use the new method well enough to make the change work (Fullen, 2001). Adult participants teaching the experimental group expressed these concerns. However, the school was engaged in a process of transformation and viewed the study as an opportunity for professional growth. Using the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies as an intervention tool for the first time required developing new pedagogical skills for instruction and a new understanding of the comprehension process. The implementation dip may explain the cognitive results for the experimental group. Nevertheless, the experimental group performed as well as, and in some cases better than, students in the control group.

Fullen's ideas were realized in this study when the teachers and principal of a second school that had initially been part of the investigation distinctly expressed the social-psychological fear of change. Ultimately the school withdrew from the study.

### **Embedded Professional Development**

Finally, the individualized and embedded professional development provided the experimental teaching staff with a new pedagogical foundation. The four adult participants who taught the students in the experimental group received intensive short-term training. Professional development sessions based upon the needs of the adult learners were scheduled throughout the 14-week treatment. The results indicated that in a relatively short period of time, the newly introduced intervention was as effective as the traditional instructional strategies that were routine to staff and students. Although no statistical significant difference was realized, the students in the experimental group performed as well as, and in some cases better than, students in the control group. This finding is especially encouraging when considering that strategy instruction "is extremely time intensive, with effects often taking months to occur" (Dole et al., 1996, p. 66).

### **Summary**

This study coupled the theoretical foundations for effective strategy instruction with a practical approach to implement an effective intervention. The data yielded results that indicated the treatment was an effective instructional approach for a variety of learning styles and supported reader self-perceptions. Although no statistical significance was realized, students who received instruction using the experimental intervention scored as well as and in some cases better than students who received alternative methods of reading intervention. This is a substantial finding because the alternative instructional methods were familiar practices historically implemented by teachers to promote comprehension in the upper elementary grades. The fact that the Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies was a *new* intervention implemented over a 14-week period and had an immediate impact showed promise for continued use and



refinement. In addition, all teachers trained in the process expressed the benefits that they believed students yielded that the data did not measure. Many of the students in the experimental group began asking thought-provoking questions and engaging in conversation about the texts with one another without being prompted as the treatment progressed.

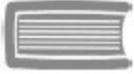
Instruction is often delivered in an analytic step-by-step method. It is imperative to find interventions for struggling readers that appeal to all types of learning styles. The Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies instructional practices were conducive to both global and analytic learning styles. The intervention yielded positive results for students who exhibited a global and integrated learning style. Global and integrated learners often need a “big picture” view or holistic manner of instruction. The emphasis on creating meaningful connections and inferring through extensive conversations between students to grasp the meaning of the text at a deeper level was advantageous for the global and integrated learners. Global learners in the experimental group also exhibited a more positive self-perception of themselves at the conclusion of the investigation.

A wealth of information exists on reading comprehension instruction. A variety of authors have provided lists and the theoretical principles on which the lists are founded. Questions remain about which strategies work best, in what combination, and for whom. The Four Powerful Comprehension Strategies used in this study provided a step toward creating practical application information combining a variety of research-based practices.

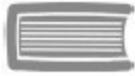
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## Top Ten Tips for Fostering The New Literacies of Online Reading Comprehension In Your Classroom

Julie Coiro, PhD., University of Rhode Island

Having the ability to comprehend and create online information texts will play a central role in our students' success in a digital information age. Unfortunately, it is challenging to know how best to introduce these new online reading comprehension skills as part of today's reading and writing curriculum. To address this challenge, I offer ten promising practices that reflect research-based guidelines (Coiro, 2009a) for supporting students' online literacy development in school classrooms.

1. **Help students understand the unique relationships between offline and online reading strategy use.** Literacy and content-area reading lessons should encourage students to notice the similarities and differences between offline and online text features (e.g., graphics, hyperlinked headings, digitized speech, and video) while discussing suitable reading purposes and audiences for each. Several lessons designed by classroom teachers for the ReadWriteThink online lesson databases ([www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)) effectively illustrate reflective classroom assignments that compare and contrast offline and online text comprehension processes. Over time, reflective thinking about these differences helps students gain a deeper understanding of how to navigate and comprehend information on the Internet.
2. **Provide explicit teacher and peer think-aloud models of effective online reading comprehension strategy use.** Instructional think-alouds can model strategies for formulating online questions, generating effective keyword searches, critically evaluating online sources, or integrating information from multiple sources using a particular online communication tool such as email, blogs, or discussion boards (see Coiro, 2005 for four strategy lessons in this area). Over time, you can gradually release responsibility to empower students in the online meaning-making process.
3. **Embed explicit strategy lessons within curriculum-based online information challenges.** Rather than teach online reading strategies as part of an isolated technology lesson with the computer teacher, a curriculum-based online information challenge invites students to use a range of Internet technologies linked directly to a particular content theme or learning objective. Small groups of students are presented with content-related information problems designed both to develop conceptual knowledge and elicit important online reading skills (e.g., asking questions, locating, evaluating, synthesizing, and communicating). Lessons are designed to minimize teacher talk, maximize student engagement, and provide time at the end for students to debrief and to exchange strategies with the entire class, after having done so in their small groups (for more information, see Leu, Coiro, Castek, Henry, Reinking, & Hartman, 2008).
4. **Honor the literacies students bring to school from their daily lives.** We are in need of new frameworks and associated instructional models that bridge in-school and out-of-school practices to exploit the multiple literacy competencies that



students bring to school. We can begin by fostering a classroom culture that recognizes the multiple literacies of every student and makes space for students to share their expertise as part of classroom routines. Emerging research highlights the potential of connecting personal and academic online reading tasks to facilitate conventional learning outcomes, new literacies, and student engagement (e.g., Burnett & Wilkinson, 2005; O'Brien, Beach, & Scharber, 2007). Gradually, students begin to understand how to use literacy differently for different purposes, in and out of school, and realize the need to flexibly apply these skills for new purposes and new contexts using new technologies.

5. **Provide space for students to explore, interpret, and create multiple forms and genres of texts.** Opportunities for students to interact with images, soundtracks, and text interconnected in complex, multifaceted ways as part of school projects can prompt more sophisticated uses of multimodal online texts (Tierney, Bond, & Bresler, 2006). When teachers recognize the role of creative composing and innovation as part of literacy development, reluctant readers and writers, in particular, see themselves as capable text producers with authentic opportunities to contribute to their classroom literacy communities.
6. **Clarify new roles and relationships for collaborating with peers and teachers.** Because literacy contexts change so quickly on the Internet, it is important that teachers be flexible in exploring and clarifying what they expect from themselves and of their students as part of face-to-face and online collaborations. Students should come to appreciate that each of their peers brings to the group a different, but valuable, set of skills and experiences that can positive influence the

group's overall ability to solve problems with the Internet (Cope & Kalantzis, 2002; Schulz-Zander, Buchter, & Dalmer, 2002). Similarly, as teachers explore how to plan and orchestrate complex online learning tasks, students should have plenty of authentic opportunities to work as partners with teachers to support their use of technology in classrooms.

7. **Promote students' awareness of how positive dispositions impact reading comprehension and learning on the Internet.** In open-ended Internet reading environments, successful online readers are those who manage rapidly changing text forms with persistence, flexibility, creativity, patience, critical stance, and self-reflection (American Association of School Librarians, 2007). As individual students gain a sense of themselves and their efforts as readers, they should be encouraged to understand how their habits and attitudes influence their ability to comprehend challenging texts. Regular strategy conversations can integrate a focus on personal dimensions with social, cognitive, and knowledge-building dimensions of classroom life to support students as they work to make sense of online and offline texts.
8. **Design collaborative inquiry projects that naturally prompt interdisciplinary connections to 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills.** Productive online learning tasks empower students to solve important problems by integrating their knowledge of several subject areas with opportunities to apply their developing financial, global, and civic literacies in real academic learning contexts (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007). Thus, effective online literacy teachers seek to promote students' self-efficacy and online reading confidence, while integrating opportunities to practice entrepreneurial skills, develop a mutual respect for diverse cultures and

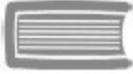
lifestyles, and participate effectively in civic life experiences.

9. **Employ multiple alternative forms of assessment that evaluate group and individual learning processes and products.** Students learning how to read successfully on the Internet should have opportunities to engage in self-, peer-, and teacher assessments of their online strategy use as part of reflective learning process (Coiro & Castek, 2010). In doing so, students begin to accept more responsibility for their learning and reflect more thoughtfully on their literacy efforts and performance. Take time to teach your students how to set and monitor realistic online comprehension goals and encourage students to share and reflect on their online reading strategy use during each phase of the inquiry process. Finally, employ alternative measures of Internet reading performance that capture both a student's individual online reading ability or contribution to an assigned online reading task and the quality of his or her working group's interactions and discussion (see ideas in Coiro, 2009b).
10. **Read, network, reflect, and read some more:** Because online literacy contexts and digital literacy tools will continue to rapidly emerge faster than any one person can keep pace with, we must join forces as educators in ways that capitalize on our different areas of expertise and interest. Build partnerships with colleagues, read as much as you have time for, and exchange ideas and questions you have about new literacies with those around you. Become an active member of an online learning community such as The New Literacies Collaborative (<http://newlitcollaborative.ning.com/>) to seek advice when things get overwhelming and to share moments of success as they emerge. Actively build connections between your own literacy

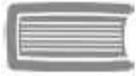
efforts and those around you as you venture forward on the journey to prepare today's students for their literacy futures in a globally networked, digital information world. Keep reading, choose a starting place, set an action plan, be patient, and move forward – you will soon be amazed to realize the new possibilities of the Internet for teaching and learning literacy in school.

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## IT'S FUNNY

**Kevin Tenemaza**  
**Thomas Edison Middle School**  
**Mr. Whiting-Grade 7**

it's funny how hello is always combined with  
goodbye

it's funny how good memories can start to make  
you cry

it's funny how forever never seems to last

it's funny how much you'd lose if you forgot about  
your past

it's funny how "friends" can just leave when you  
are down

it's funny how when you need someone they never  
are around

it's funny how people change and think they're so  
much better

it's funny how many lies are packed into one love  
letter

it's funny how one night can contain so much  
regret

it's funny how you can forgive but not forget

it's funny how life turns out to be but the funniest  
part of all, is none of that's funny to me. And that  
is all I need.

## MESSAGES IN BROKEN GLASS

**Sheridan M. Jones**  
**Schaghticoke Middle School, New**  
**Milford,CT**

Messages in broken glass

Shattered from memory windows of the past

Haunt my wandering mind

Though the slicking edges try o be kind

Memories in broken glass

Slowly slide across the old worn floor

Crawling to my extended fingers

My body lurches in retort

The memories of me

Mutilate more than any thorn

Thoughts of tears and yesteryears

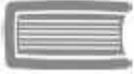
So desperately try to teach

But my heart revolts

Messages in broken glass

Shattered from memory windows of the past

Show the irony of my name



## LAST GOOD-BYE

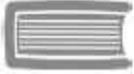
Tess Harkin  
Schaghticoke Middle School  
Mrs. Russo- Grade 7

A father's hand  
Rough and calloused  
Against her  
Small, porcelain one.  
A single kiss  
Against his  
Stubbled cheek  
"One for the road", she whispers.  
One lonely tear  
Wells up in his eye,  
Then falls,  
And finally lands  
On his cotton collar.  
The train rolls in now  
Clouding the air with smoke,  
Bells ringing,  
Wheels a-clanking.  
It's time for a last good-bye.

## **HEY YOU!**

**Briana Burt**  
**Thomas Edison Middle School**  
**Mrs. Fonseca-Grade 8**

Yeah you, the one who left and forgot about me  
Yeah the one who never calls  
Never thinks to send a letter  
Yeah you, the one whom I wish I could remember  
Even though everyone says that I am a spitting image of you  
The guy who told me that he loved me  
Oh yeah, I have heard that before  
The “man” I called dad  
But you know what...  
A “man” doesn’t walk out on his family  
A “man” doesn’t forget his child’s birthday  
A “man” doesn’t go back on his word  
But obviously, you are not the “man” I thought you were  
Now, the “man” I call dad is.  
He is a “man” who can face me and tell me that he will be here for me  
Even though he is tough on me  
He is the “man” who taught me that winning isn’t everything  
When you, the so called “man,” has not even come to one of my games  
He is the “man” who will be here for me  
Because he says that the “man” who was supposed to be here, will never come back  
Even if I hope and pray as hard as I have, the “man” will just be my memory—a weak faint memory  
That is nothing to me, because this man is history.



## BIRD'S EYE INDEPENDENCE

**Christopher Ciaglo**

**Sarah Noble Intermediate School, New Milford, CT**

**Mrs. Mandeville- Grade 6**

The  
long-legs-no-wings  
were inside  
one  
of  
their  
no-twigs-brick-nests.  
The  
long-legs-no-wings  
were bickering.  
He could see their  
not-hard-fleshy-beaks  
moving, saying.  
Then,  
one  
of  
the  
long-legs  
pulled out  
a  
feather.  
This  
made Little Robin  
sad  
upset  
angry.

Then,  
one-by-one,  
the  
long-legs  
stepped up  
to  
a  
mother-tree  
table,  
and  
wrote  
something  
with  
the  
feather,  
the  
feather that  
had come  
from his  
uncle.  
Then,  
Little Robin  
fluttered away.  
The  
year was  
1776.

## CARR Events, Grants & Scholarships

### Events

- October 7, 2010: Dr. Patricia Edwards, IRA President, The Hawthorne Inn, Berlin, CT- 5:00-6:30 pm
- November 4-7, 2010: CRA Conference: The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell, CT- 8:00- 4:00 pm
- \*\*November 6, 2010: Dr. Carolyn Coil, Coast Guard Academy, Dimick Auditorium- Session 1- 9:00-12:00 pm
- \*\*January 29, 2011: Dr. Sally Reis, Fairfield University, Barone Campus Center- Session 2: 9:00-12:00 pm
- \*\*March 21: Dr. Lois Lanning, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT- 5:00-6:30 pm
- \*\*March 26, 2011: Spring Institute: Dr. Karen Costello, Dr. Barbara Marinak, Dr. Kay Stahl, Dr. Dave Monti, and Dr. Cheryl Dickinson, Wesleyan University- 9:00-3:00 pm
- \*\*April 1-20, 2011: CARR Poetry Slam Contest- open to all Districts/Schools
- \*\*April 30, 2011: Dr. Nonie Lesaux, Central Connecticut State University , Torp Theater- Session 3- 9:00-12:00 pm
- May TBA: Celebration of CARR research and Poetry Slam Contest winners, Pine Wood Country Club, Southington, CT- 8:00-11:30 am

**\*\* Literacy Lecture Institutes and Series "SRBI and Differentiation"** sponsored by CRA and local councils across the state

### CARR Research and Scholarship Grants

CARR encourages research in reading, writing, and the language arts through two types of scholarships:

1. CARR members may apply for a ***Best Practice in Teaching Literacy mini-grant*** of \$500.00 for action research in the classroom.
2. Graduate students in a program leading to a reading/language arts consultant certification or certification as a remedial language arts teacher or a doctorate in curriculum and instruction may apply for the \$750.00 **Wirth-Santoro Research Scholarship**.

Research and scholarship grant recipients must submit an article on their research for publication in the *CARReader*. For further particulars on either of these grants, please contact Linda Kauffmann: [Linda.Kauffmann@gmail.com](mailto:Linda.Kauffmann@gmail.com).