

**The CARReader
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**THE WIRTH-SANTORO
SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

By

Jean Klein, Scholarship Chair

Amanda Hicks, CARR's
scholarship winner for the
year 2000, presented her
thesis study at the CARR
annual breakfast meeting on
May 19, 2001. Her topic was
"A Comparison of Informal
Reading Inventories."

Through her study of the
Informal Reading Inventory
(Burns & Roe), *Reading
Inventory for the Classroom*
(Flynt & Cooter), *Quali-
tative Reading Inventory*
(Leslie & Caldwell), and *The
Reading Inventory* (Shanker
& Ekwall). Amanda found
the Shanker and Ekwall
informal reading inventory to
be the most accurate in its
assessment of the three
students in her six-month
study. *The Reading
Inventory* was also found to
be user-friendly.

Amanda is a first/second
grade teacher at the
Integrated Day Charter
School in Norwich. She
completed her thesis under
the guidance of Dr. Patti
Lynn O'Brien at Central
Connecticut State University.

Each year CARR awards a
\$750 scholarship to a
graduate student doing
research in reading or
language arts who is in a
certification program leading
to the reading/language arts
consultant endorsement. We
are expanding this program to
include doctoral candidates
who already have their
certification but are doing
research in the field of
reading and language arts.
The winner of the award

returns to CARR the
following year at the annual
breakfast meeting to present
the findings of the completed
study. CARR's membership
benefits greatly from these
informative presentations.
Amanda's presentation was
not only informative but also
timely.

This year for the first time
CARR was able to award two
scholarships. One of the two
winners was Jennifer Atkins,
a graduate student at Central
Connecticut State University
and a kindergarten teacher at
Saint Thomas School in
Thomaston. Her research
involves "Encouraging Pro-
Social Behavior in the
Kindergarten Classroom to
Promote Positive Social and
Reading Results." The other
winner was Carole Ekholm, a
graduate student at Eastern
Connecticut State University
and a Title I teacher at
Griswold Elementary School
in Jewett City. Carole's
research project deals with
children's aesthetic responses
to literature. We are looking
forward to Jennifer's and
Carole's presentations on
their research at our May,
2002 breakfast meeting

**CARR COMPLETES
SECONDARY
RESEARCH**

By

Jean Klein, Research Chair

In the spring of 2000 CARR
began a study of high schools
to answer the question,
"What are the characteristics
of successful reading
programs at the secondary
level?" While the study was
confined to high schools, the
results are applicable to
middle schools as well.

(continued from page 1)
The study has taken over a year to complete. The published report has now been sent to all superintendents and high school principals.

A copy of the full report is available for \$6.00 (check payable to CARR). Send your check and request for the full report to:
Jean Klein, 3 Budd Drive,
Newtown, CT 06470.
Below is the Executive Summary, an excerpt from the full report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reading instruction frequently ends with elementary school. In middle and high schools it is often limited to at-risk students. And yet the literacy demands of the adolescent increase in complexity: the vocabulary load alone is heavy and specialized. In this century it is inappropriate to end reading instruction in the elementary grades. Advanced reading strategies must be taught in secondary schools if students are to become critical thinkers who are able to deal with increasingly abstract concepts. Moreover, reading strategy instruction should be part of all academic subjects.

In March, 2000 the Connecticut Association of Reading Research (CARR) began a study of

Connecticut's high schools to answer the question, "What are the characteristics of successful reading programs at the secondary level?" At the time the study began, very little research had been reported on secondary school reading programs. CARR's study in 1997, *Literacy for All: Reading/Language Arts Programs and Personnel in Connecticut Schools*, included a survey of high school programs, describing what was happening in Connecticut schools. The present study enlarges upon the recommendations in the earlier study and defines reading instruction that works with today's adolescents.

These are new times which require new approaches to literacy and a broadening of what it means to be a literate in contemporary society. Further, we must prepare our secondary students for a fast-changing world with literacy demands we can only imagine. The old transmission method of learning, lecture and notetaking, will not reach today's adolescent. We must change our pedagogy to include interactive ways of learning, where the student is an active participant and self-evaluator who makes connections to his or her world. Today's adolescent needs to see relevance in academic learning to become

tomorrow's responsible, caring adult who values diversity. We want our students to be thinkers and lifelong learners who are compassionate as well.

CARR's study has taken over a year to complete. Questionnaires were sent to 22 high schools that met the following criteria: (1) have scored among the highest within their Educational Reference Group (ERG) on the Response to Literature section of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT); (2) have shown at least a 10% gain on the Response to Literature section of the CAPT between 1997 and 1999; and (3) have at least 50% of their students achieving standard on the Response to Literature section of the CAPT. The Response to Literature section was chosen as a comparison since the standard involves a reading rubric. The fifteen schools that responded to the questionnaire are the subject of this report. Interviews were also conducted in seven of these schools to add qualitative information to the quantitative data. These 15 schools have strong administrative support for reading across the curriculum. Reading strategies are integrated into all context areas. Wide reading is characteristic of these schools, not only with challenging

(continued from page 2) texts but with varied reading materials as well. Study skills are both integrated into the content areas and offered as separate courses for both college-bound and struggling readers. The English curriculum is rigorous and provides for advanced students as well as assistance for those who struggle with language arts. Professional development focuses on reading strategies in all content areas, and is particularly strong in the schools that have reading/language arts consultants. Help for struggling readers is also particularly strong in the schools that have reading/language arts consultants. Help is provided in other schools through summer programs, supplemental classes, after-school and in-school tutoring, and elective study. Not only is the curriculum aligned with CAPT, and assessment and benchmarks developed locally, but reading strategies are embedded in daily instruction across the disciplines. Students are active participants in their own learning with student-directed lessons and self-evaluation incorporated in content classes. Collaboration and cooperation, with open-ended questions and discussion, lead students to stretch their thinking. Motivation is a key to

adolescent learning, and these schools find ways to captivate the students to invest in their own learning as intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic rewards are also used to develop intrinsic motivation. A special effort is made to coordinate the high school and middle school curriculum for a well-articulated reading program. The schools surveyed included every ERG except ERG 1, thus supporting the notion that all students can learn and learn well.

The recommendations in this report grew out of the questionnaire results and the interviews coupled with the latest research. Toward the latter part of the year 2000, we began to see a focus on adolescent literacy in the national research. These studies are carefully delineated in this report to support the following recommendations.

CARR recommends:

1. **A broadened view of literacy and the notion of learning.**
2. **Reading strategy instruction in all content areas.**
3. **Direct instruction of vocabulary in all content areas as essential to comprehension development.**
4. **Literacy assessments that inform instruction, with self-evaluation as an integral part of the learning process of adolescents.**
5. **Classrooms that create an environment that not only honor diverse backgrounds and experiences but also stretch adolescent thinking and motivate literacy.**
6. **Access to a reading/language arts consultant on site for every teacher and student to guide reading instruction in all content areas.**
7. **Better coordination of special education teachers with reading/language arts consultants and classroom teachers.**
8. **Professional development to help classroom teachers learn to use extended time periods advantageously for literacy development of students.**
9. **Use of technology in secondary reading instruction where appropriate.**
10. **Content reading instruction for all secondary academic teachers, both pre-service and inservice.**

Schools that are successful in teaching their adolescent students to read and write well in this technological and information age are using these approaches to learning. We do not need to abandon all forms of transmission pedagogy that have heretofore dominated the secondary classroom, but the secondary teachers in this study are successful because they are creating classrooms where students are active participants in their own learning, and the activities have personal relevance. The teachers in these successful schools know that the best questions do not have a single right answer and that optimum learning will take place only when the teacher pays attention to the social contexts in

(continued from page 3)
which learning occurs. New times offer new challenges. Our Connecticut schools must meet the demands of the adolescent world of today and the future. Literacy in the 21st century has a new

meaning, but that meaning is continually changing in ever widening contexts. The schools in this report are already on the way toward increased literacy for their students. It is not enough, however, for schools to have only one

or two of these characteristics; all the characteristics described in this report must be present if our students are to be literate and prepared for the future world in which they will live.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At this time of year teachers are like Janus, looking back at the recent academic year and ahead to the promise of a new year's experience. Looking back at CARR's 2000-2001 activities we can all feel a sense of pride. Our own research, led by Jean Klein, has given us data to support change. Our scholarship winner's study of IRIs clarifies the components of these assessments. Our general meetings hosted speakers in the areas of adolescent literacy and media literacy and invited us to think about an expanded definition of literacy in New Times.

The year 2001-2002 will see the completion of research projects by two CARR members. Please hold the following general meeting dates:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SPEAKER(S)</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
Sept. 19, 2001	Dr. Donald Leu, Jr. University of Connecticut "New Literacies for New Times"	Judiciary Room, State Capitol
March 21, 2002	Donna Ogle, President of the International Reading Association	To Be Announced
May 18, 2002	Scholarship Winners	Faenza's on Main

As we look toward another year of CARR activities, I'd like to take a moment to invite you to consider the many upcoming opportunities that CARR has to offer. If you would like to become more involved in CARR, please e-mail Rosanne Daigneault (dgnltDANO@aol.com) or Choong Lan How (Chow@hartnet.com). Share your ideas, and your expertise. We look forward to your participation on the CARReader, research committee, Connecticut Reading Conference, publicity, exploring technology connections, and/or other areas of interest.

A goal for the 2001-2002 year is to increase CARR's membership. Help to broaden our knowledge base by inviting a friend to attend a meeting. Post our invitation on the bulletin board at school. Your friends and colleagues will thank you.

What a unique perspective our Janus-like stance affords us. It gives us a clear vision of where we've been and allows us to determine a focus that leads us to where we want to go. It permits us to use past accomplishments to achieve new goals and objectives.

As the 2001-2002 president of CARR, I invite you to set your sights on the future as we embark on a wondrous collegial journey of the study and exploration of reading research.

**LANGUAGE ARTS RESEARCH IN
CONNECTICUT: An Agenda for the Present
and the Future**

By

Douglas Kaufman, Ph.D.

Almost twenty years ago a literacy revolution hit our schools. When Donald Graves published *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work* in 1983, he prompted an avalanche of research and writing that transformed reading and writing instruction in the United States. Work by Nancie Atwell (1987), Lucy Calkins (1986), Linda Rief (1992), and others have promoted classrooms where students choose their own reading books and writing topics, have time to read and write in class, receive rich response from peers while they create, self-evaluate to grow, revise work, and bring their personal lives into the classroom. We have altered the curriculum to support the constructivist notion that people learn by building off their own knowledge and interests. Literacy instruction has radically changed in the past two decades.

Or has it? As a researcher I have been in many classrooms like the ones described above where students perform brilliantly, but I have also seen many other teachers struggle to implement conditions they believe are better for their students. "Nanci Atwell's classroom looks good on paper," a teacher once said to me, "but it doesn't work in real life. I tried it. It's too hard; my students are different."

I know this isn't true. There are simply too many diverse classrooms that successfully support students' own real reading and writing efforts. But I also know from where this teacher spoke, for there are *many* fine teachers out there who have struggled mightily to create the "Atwellian" classroom and consider themselves to have failed.

My current research agenda is devoted to learning the differences between teachers who have successfully created classrooms where students take charge of their learning and teachers who want to do so but have struggled (Kaufman, 2000, in press). In the following paragraphs I outline some of the areas of this agenda that I see as important to understanding how to create successful progressive literacy programs.

**What *conditions* promote literacy learning
and why do teachers have trouble creating
them?**

Many researchers have suggested that methodologies, strategies, or subject matter may not be at the center of our instruction. Rather, in more student-centered classrooms it is important to first focus on creating conditions within which independent learning can occur. Brian Cambourne defines conditions as "particular modes of being" that enables students to learn language (1995, p. 184). Three of the most famous of these conditions, which were first introduced by former first-grade teacher Mary Ellen Giacobbe (Atwell, 1987), are 1) *extensive time* to read and write in class, 2) *choice* (or *ownership*) of reading materials and writing topics, and 3) *rich response* to works in progress. Others have suggested that classroom creators provide extensive *modeling* of work, *high expectations*, and many opportunities for *evaluation* (Cambourne, 1995; Graves 1994). In my own work, I identify two conditions that often pose a challenge for new teachers to create: organization that offers boundaries but also promotes student movement, and student-teacher *relationships* built on rapport that encourage the students to discuss their work and their lives (Kaufman, 2000). (I'll discuss these two presently.)

Beginning with conditions rather than methods or strategies are important. When we focus on methods our teaching often becomes formulaic, which often prevents us from acting in the best interests of the student because the "steps" of the method preempt the student's individual needs. However, when we focus on conditions we work to create fruitful learning *environment* where methods arise from the needs of the students. It is becoming clear, though, that in many classrooms where teachers want to create more progressive pedagogy, the focus is still on formula. We need to learn why this is the case.

**Why do students have difficulty accepting the
conditions of choice and time?**

While we have come to understand that choice, time, and response are vital to students' positive literacy learning experiences, we have not fully explored all the implications of implementing these conditions in the classroom. These new freedoms often terrify them. They feel unsafe and directionless because, for the first time, no one is telling them exactly what to do. When

(continued from page 5) exuberant teachers offer these conditions, they often forget children's unfamiliarity with freedom and then wonder why many of them resist or rebel. The result is often frustration and failure. We need more research about how to help students welcome freedom as they operate within their zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). How do we best guide them until they can function on their own, raise expectations, and then guide again?

How does progressive classroom organization and management successfully promote student movement rather than inhibit it?

Many studies show that new teachers' primary concern is classroom management (Andrade & Hakim, 1995; Boostrom, 1991; Doyle, 1986; Jones & Vesilind, 1995). Often, this concern compels them to focus on rule systems that prevent students from moving: the teacher provides information to students while they remain passive in their seats, receiving it. This feels very comfortable for most teachers because it offers them control. Potential disruptions are minimized.

However, classroom conditions such as choice, time, and response actually *promote* independent student movement; they *require* students to be more mobile. Therefore, the management systems that some teachers have in place may directly contradict their philosophical groundings.

So, the question becomes, how do we not only prepare students for more physical and intellectual independence but also limit chaos? My current research looks at how language arts workshop teachers organize and manage their classrooms in ways that promote student movement that is educative and efficient. Early findings suggest that successful workshop teachers who encourage student movement

- 1) focus on teaching logistics and procedures more than they do rules of behavior (which channels movement into productive activity) and
- 2) spend an extraordinary amount of time at the beginning of the year on organization and procedures until students understand and use them independently. This focus sometimes takes the place of more direct reading and writing instruction (Kaufman, 2000), but allows students to attend more fully to language arts issues after procedures become automatic (Kaufman, in press).

How does technology influence literacy learning?

New classroom technology innovations appear every month, and many teachers are behind the curve (Pianfetti, 2000). Students seem to know much more about the Internet and related technologies than we feel we ever will. But the Internet, in particular, has the potential to offer students exponentially greater amounts of information. As a researcher, I have two questions in particular that I want to answer: 1) How does this increased access to information influence the independent student motion learning that I suggest defines successful literacy learning? 2) Does technology help students not only access information better but also *think* about it better? This second question is crucial. We know that information access will not slow down, but the information will be useless if students do not have the time to ponder, experiment with, weigh, discuss, and challenge it. Is information from technology being used well?

What is the impact of high-stakes testing on literacy instruction?

Any teacher in Connecticut will tell you that the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) have radically influenced their instruction. Particularly in the elementary grades, teachers feel forced to abandon teaching and learning practices they believe are essential in order to focus their attention on the narrow band of literacy knowledge that the standardized tests are designed to measure. Many administrators feel their jobs are on the line if their schools' scores do not rise. My questions become: 1) Do the high-stakes nature of these tests diminish necessary literacy instruction in areas that are not covered by the CMT or CAPT tests and 2) How can we prove, or disprove, that the Connecticut standardized tests have actually improved literacy learning in the long term? At this point it appears that politicians and fringe groups have used the testing issue to promote agendas that may not have anything to do with actual good teaching and learning practices. A great deal of study is needed to move past political agendas and learn how these tests actually influence students' literacy growth.

(continued from page 6)

What are the needs of literacy learners in urban areas?

This research issue is closely connected to the previous one, for it is in urban areas like Hartford and New Haven that test scores are the lowest, and where superintendents have vowed to bring them up, no matter the cost.

However, another important issue that arises is how the greater cultural and ethnic diversity of Connecticut's urban areas influence—and are influenced by—certain literacy education practices. For example, Lisa Delpit (1995) charges that process approaches to writing serve minority students poorly in that they are framed in the rules and practices of the “culture of power.” These rules and practices may appear obvious to those in power but may also be decontextualized and thus less apparent to those with less power. Delpit's work challenges us to examine the tenets of current literacy practices for their universal appeal. It may be that the reason many urban districts have adopted “back to basics” approaches is because we have not yet found ways to recognize all students' differences, whether they are cultural, ethnic, geographic, or economic.

An Invitation

In order to be truly effective, I believe, a research agenda has to have the interest and support of a wide variety of committed literacy educators across the state. My agenda by no means encompasses all the literacy issues important to Connecticut's teachers and learners; it is my personal beginning. As one who is relatively new to Connecticut, I invite you to share your own agendas, ideas, and concerns with me so that I can learn more about our specific needs. What questions gnaw at you when you think about literacy learning in Connecticut? What problems most need to be addressed? I welcome classroom teachers, researchers, and other committed individuals to contact me so that we may begin to collaborate and help move literacy in Connecticut forward.

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MATCHING CHILDREN WITH TEXTS: A Study of Parental Knowledge

By
Antoinette Fornshell
CARR Scholarship Winner, 1999

As a language arts consultant, I have helped countless teachers understand the importance of matching children with books. I have come to realize that as teachers, we look at books differently than the average parents. When choosing books for children, teachers often consider text characteristics such as the following:

- Size and placement of print
- Level picture support
- Spacing between words and lines
- Language structures and vocabulary
- Interest of child
- Etc.

Years ago, it was a novel idea to encourage parents to read aloud to their children. Jim Trelease's Read Aloud Handbook brought the idea to the mainstream. Hospitals gave away books to newborns. Authors such as Rosemary Wells have published "politically correct" books such as Read to Your Bunny, which also help spread the message. Everyone seems to understand the importance of reading aloud to children.

But, what about helping children who are beginning to learn to read? There is research based on Marie Clay's Reading Recovery program, which has been around for decades and has given educators a new understanding of what children do when they read. Marie Clay tells us that good readers use three sources of information, cueing systems, in harmony when they read. Children need to be strategic in their use of the three sources of information: syntax, meaning and phonics. There are certain characteristics of texts, which support the balanced use of strategies. Most teachers are becoming aware of these and as educators we are now taking a close look at the implications for classroom practices.

Most parents I know through no fault of their own, tell their kids to "sound it out" in

an effort to help them work through a book. Teachers realize that this type of help does not encourage kids to use what they know about language (syntax), or the meaning of what they are reading. Parents are bombarded with ads for learning centers, phonics games, and misinformation in the press in response to the "reading wars." Knowledge about how kids read, based on solid research, is being kept from the public. The average citizen is ten years behind in educational developments. Would you still go to a doctor who was practicing the same way she was ten years ago without regard for the latest research? But, where can parents turn for information?

Publishers "level" texts based on word counts. The current leveling systems do not take into consideration any of the text characteristics, which are so important to beginning readers. I have been teaching teachers to disregard published levels and consider more meaningful ways to match readers and books. Parents need this information too.

What is it that kids need to be doing in school and at home in order to become excellent readers? They need stamina and they need to be strategic readers. In other words, the more they read material on their level, the better they get. In the classrooms where I work as a staff developer, independent reading has become central to the curriculum. How about at home? Parents say that kids don't like to read. Perhaps if the children were matched up with appropriately leveled reading material they might feel more successful and, therefore, enjoy it more. The more they like it, the more they'll do and the better they'll get.

As a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, I am in the process of choosing a topic for a dissertation study. The CARR scholarship allowed me to develop a pilot study, which will become the basis for my dissertation. I developed a questionnaire in hopes of discovering what parents need to know in order to be more successful when choosing

(continued from page 8) books for children. Educators, publishers, libraries and bookstores may also benefit from this information.

Although my initial study was small, I gained some valuable insights into how some parents choose books for children and what they know about supporting children when they encounter difficulty in reading. I sent 1,054 questionnaires to families in two elementary schools in Ridgefield, Connecticut. One hundred and sixty-seven were returned.

My overall impressions from the returned questionnaires were that the parents who responded were a very informed, invested group of parents. The questionnaire was open-ended and was, therefore, limited because the parents who responded don't necessarily represent a balanced view of the entire population. Also Ridgefield represents a small percentage of the population of the state of Connecticut. In the future, I plan on broadening my study.

The most interesting aspect of the results came about unintentionally. Because I sent the questionnaire to the two different schools, I coded them so that I could compare responses. It's in the analysis of the different responses that I became aware of some real differences in parent perceptions of reading. I was left with questions for further study. Why did two sets of parents describe "success in reading" so differently from each other? For instance, parents from one school were more apt to describe their children as successful readers because they choose to read and enjoy reading. The parents from the second school described success as good grades and high-test scores. Are the schools sending different messages?

This type of questionnaire yielded valuable information about parents' perceptions of reading and I would recommend that other districts try to gather this information through such a study. In the future I hope to consider how to reach the parents who did

not respond. Also, I am working on providing workshops and materials on leveling books based on text characteristics, which support readers for teachers and parents. As reading specialists, we would be wise to consider creating flyers and publications, which provide benchmarks for levels as well as information about success in reading in general. We know a lot about how to support young readers; the parents need this information too.

Research Problem:

A study of parental knowledge regarding matching children with texts, which support reading growth (book choice).

Hypothesis:

1. Parents do not know what to look for regarding text characteristics when choosing books to support their children's reading lives.
2. Parents do not know how to support readers when they encounter difficulty.

CHOOSING BOOKS FOR CHILDREN QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Child(ren)'s age(s) _____
2. How confident do you feel in your ability to choose books for children? Please explain.
3. What do you look for when choosing a book for a specific child? (It may help to describe a recent time when you chose a book for a child. Be as specific as you can.)
4. Where do you get information about book choices?
5. Is your child a successful reader? (You may consider one or more children.) How do you know?
6. How do you help your child through difficulty in reading (or learning to read)?

***** THANK YOU*****

A special thank you to Barbara Zekala for typing and to Meredith Menton for formatting this issue of The CARReader.

**CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION
INITIATIVES**

By
Kristina Elias and
Joseph Gambini
CSDE Reading/Language
Arts Consultants

The State Department of Education has had a number of new initiatives this year. In September, the Third Generation of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) was given for the first time. Teachers have been grateful to receive information about how well their students are doing in the areas of initial understanding, interpretation and critical stance. This whole new area of feedback from the state has encouraged schools to tinker with curriculum in the classrooms so that student needs are more pointedly met. All schools received a wide range of information about their students as a result of the new test feedback forms. And parents are especially pleased to understand where their children fall in the relationship to average school, district and state scores.

One of the most important documents to come out of the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction, *The Connecticut Blueprint for Reading Achievement*, was printed in October of 2000 and distributed to all K-3 teachers and support ser-

vices such as Reading Specialists, Speech and Language Specialists and Special Educators. The Early Reading Success Blueprint panel, a thirty-one member group with representation from the legislature, universities, the public schools and professional reading organizations, crafted the legislated blueprint to guide the teaching of reading in all K-3 classes in Connecticut. Both federal and state funds were provided in the 2000-01 school year to help priority schools to begin to bring the goals of the report to fruition. The federally funded Haskins Project created demonstration sites in eight Connecticut elementary schools, and preliminary results of student evaluations and qualitative data indicate that they certainly have succeeded. Likewise, the state funded RESC institutes have provided professional training and on site technical help to eighty-eight Connecticut schools. The Legislature will be examining ways to help more schools make necessary changes in classroom activities so that all K-3 students in the State of Connecticut succeed in reading.

This summer, RESCs also will be offering staff development opportunities that focus on exploring and making the practices endorsed by the Early

Reading Success Blueprint classroom friendly.

Finally, by the time you read this, Generation 2 of the CAPT will have been administered. The major change within the new generation is in reading and writing across the disciplines. We believe that this focus will place emphasis on reading and writing in all content areas, acknowledging that literacy is the responsibility of all educators. The new section that addresses this, *Reading for Information*, is similar to the CMT Reading Comprehension task. This section addresses a student's ability to read and construct meaning from non-fiction. Selections are drawn from authentic sources that a student may encounter outside of a classroom experience. These articles are taken from the social sciences, the sciences, the arts, math, and current events. Fiction is not among the readings.

The curriculum consultants of the State Department have offered and will continue to offer training to help all teachers (K-12) realize and understand their role in the development of independent readers, writers and thinkers.

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE:
If you have not yet paid your dues, please send \$20 to Helen Chaia, 29 Bonnie Drive, Farmington, CT 06032. Thank you.

STANDARDS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

By

Patricia Zimmerman
CSDE Educational Consultant

Currently, there are three self-nominated programs available to Connecticut teachers to recognize exemplary teaching. These programs reward teacher initiatives for professional development and life-long learning.

They are the federal Blue Ribbon Schools program, awarded on the collective, collaborative efforts of teachers promoting excellence within a designated school; the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, NBPTS, an independent, non-governmental organization that offers individual teachers in the United States a way to become judged in teaching competencies that are comparable to established standards in other professions; and Celebration of Excellence; a State Department of Education program that provides the opportunity for individual teachers in the state's public schools to be recognized for innovative, exemplary standards-based curriculum projects that are disseminated to colleagues in Connecticut's public school districts.

The aforementioned programs are experiencing increased public accountability to document student achievement relative to best practices employed in the classroom. Standards for both student and teacher performance are increasingly linked to student outcomes.

To become a National Board Certified Teacher, teachers complete a performance-based assessment that requires documenting, subject matter knowledge, demonstrating the

ability to teach subjects effectively and showing a proven ability to manage and measure student learning. According to a recent study by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, National Board Certified Teachers outperform their peers in teaching expertise and student achievement.

The Blue Ribbon Schools recognition process centers on eight key components of a school: students focus and support; school organization and culture; challenging standards and curriculum; active teaching and learning; professional community; leadership and educational vitality; school, family, and community partnerships; and other indicators of success. For the academic year 2002-03, these eight components and other related topics will form the basis of an application process that focuses on student achievement for Blue Ribbon Schools recognition.

Celebration of Excellence is meeting the expressed needs of its stakeholders to increase the accountability of its curricular projects; not only in terms of motivating student learning, but also in producing measurable outcomes for content objectives aligned with standards-based assessment. Standards-based products are included in the 2001-02 awarded projects. The 2002-03 Celebrant projects will include samples of student work that illustrates increasing mastery of content taught and teacher reflections on strategies that inform instruction and promote student achievement.

A Note from the Editor

CONSIDER WRITING FOR The CARReader

The CARReader provides the membership of the Connecticut Reading Association with the most recent literacy research and summaries of the implications of this research for classrooms across Connecticut. The CARReader also presents initiatives of the Connecticut State Department of Education.

We welcome short articles from CARR members concerning research they are conducting in their classrooms as well as articles involving the implementation of research-based initiatives. We also encourage graduate students who are members of CARR to consider publishing the executive summaries of their research in The CARReader. This publication is one of the few in the state that concentrates upon reading/language arts research and its implications in the classroom. With this in mind, we invite CARR members to consider publishing their research in The CARReader.

Articles should be typed and doubled spaced with a font of 12. The article should be submitted on a disk along with 3 hard copies. To be considered for the next issue, articles must be received by May 1, 2002
Send articles with SASE to:

Bill Farr, Editor, The CARReader
Neag School of Education
University of Connecticut
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
249 Glenbrook Road, Unit 2033
Storrs, CT 06269-2033

Questions: (860) 486-0285

IMPORTANT DATES TO HOLD

September 19, 2001

Dr. Donald Leu, Jr.

John & Maria Neag Endowed Chair in Literacy and Technology

From the University of Connecticut

“New Literacies for New Times:

**The changing nature of classroom literacy instruction as the Internet enters our
classrooms”**

In the Judiciary Room, State Capitol

March 21, 2002

Donna Ogle, President of the International Reading Association

Topic and location to be announced

May 18, 2002

Scholarship Winners

Jennifer Atkins, Central Connecticut State University

Carole Ekholm, Eastern Connecticut State University

Faenza's on Main, West Hartford

CARR

c/o Rosanne Daigneault

154 Buena Vista Road

West Hartford, CT 06107