Reading Comprehension and Informational Texts – Grades 4 through 12 Annotated Working Bibliography

This bibliography grew out of the National Writing Project's National Reading Initiative (NRI) between 2003 and 2007. Included are materials that have been widely used in and/or recommended through the NRI professional development work in the NWP network. We hope that the bibliography, which is not intended to be a comprehensive review of material on reading comprehension, will provide writing project sites with useful resources.

Models and Overviews of Reading Comprehension and Adolescent Literacy

"Adolescent Literacy." 2004. Special issue, *VUE (Voices in Urban Education)* 3 (Winter/Spring). Available at http://www.annenberginstitute.org/VUE/archives.php.

This issue of VUE, available from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, argues that literacy is much more than being able to read literary texts; students must be "literate" in all their subjects if they are to get more than the most basic information from their textbooks and other resources. The four articles in this issue consider the questions of who is responsible for ensuring that adolescents are literate and how students can be encouraged to expand their literacy skills through both conventional and unconventional forms.

Biancarosa, Gina, and Catherine Snow. 2004. *Reading Next*: *A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Available online at http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/ReadingNext/ReadingNext.pdf.

This report delineates fifteen elements of effective programs aimed at improving middle and high school literacy achievement. The report covers explicit comprehension instruction, reading in content areas and content in reading courses, collaborative learning, diverse texts, self-directed learning, technology, teacher teams, and school comprehensive and coordinated literacy programs.

Block, Cathy Collins, and Michael Pressley, eds. 2002. *Comprehension Instruction: Research-Based Best Practices.* New York: Guilford Press.

This collection includes articles on theoretical foundations, metacognitive practices, web-based reading, and work with at-risk adolescents. Editors recommend that teachers model, scaffold, provide guided practice, and introduce students slowly to independent use of strategies. They also claim that the "lockstep leap" of transfer [of comprehension strategies] to multiple content areas and purposes for reading is not possible (4).

"What Research Says About Reading." 2004, March. Special issue, *Educational Leadership* 61 (6).

Included in this volume are articles on a wide range of research topics, including many about struggling adolescents ("Say No to Phonics") and ELL readers.

Franzak, Judith K. 2006. "*Zoom*: A Review of the Literature on Marginalized Adolescent Readers, Literacy Theory, and Policy Implications." *Review of Educational Research* 76 (2): 209–248.

Franzak reviews the pros and cons of three models of teaching reading with struggling or "marginalized" readers: reader response, strategic reading, and critical pedagogy. She also examines adolescent literacy practices both in and out of school. She stresses the importance of purpose, choice, and relevance in reading for adolescents. Finally, she recommends that teachers become active in policymaking.

Guthrie, John T., and Donna E. Alvermann, eds. 1999. *Engaged Reading: Processes, Practices, and Policy Implications.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Reflecting the influence of John Dewey, these articles claim that engagement is created when students identify problems and investigate them through reading; engagement with reading is important for lifelong learning. Many articles integrate reading strategies into discussions of engagement. Included are discussions of engagement with reading in home and community contexts.

Kamil, Michael. 2003, November. *Adolescents and Literacy: Reading for the 21st Century.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Available at http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/reports/adolescents_and_literacy.

This document reviews research on effective literacy instruction, including the powerful and interrelated roles that motivation, engagement, phonological awareness, fluency, and word recognition play in adolescent literacy. Also included are findings on the relationship of first-language literacy to ELL literacy. Kamil advocates the use of technology in addressing adolescent reading problems and of research-based professional development for teachers.

Kucer, Stephen B. 2001. *Dimensions of Literacy: A Conceptual Base for Teaching Reading and Writing in School Settings.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kucer explores the linguistic, cognitive, sociocultural, developmental, and educational dimensions of literacy, focusing primarily on reading. The text provides background for

why strategic reading instruction is important and how it works. Classroom-based research and educational implications of theory are explored.

Luke, Allan, and Peter Freebody. 1999. *Further Notes on the Four Resources Model.* Accessed September 29, 2007. Available at http://www.readingonline.org/research/lukefreebody.html/.

Luke and Freebody are critical of any single approach to reading instruction. Instead, they propose that contemporary readers need to be able to function in four "roles": codebreaker, meaning maker, text user, and text critic. This site provides links to the original model and other work by Luke and Freebody.

Pearson, P. David. 2000. *Reading in the Twentieth Century.* Accessed September 29, 2007. Available at http://www.ciera.org/library/archive/2001-08/0108pdp.pdf.

This is a historical survey of reading research and instruction in the 20th century. Of particular interest is the discussion of the recent "politicization of reading research and policy." Pearson ends the survey by advocating an "ecologically balanced approach" to reading instruction that would incorporate "authentic texts and tasks," writing, and phonics and phonemic awareness instruction.

Purcell-Gates, Victoria, Erik Jacobson, and Sophie Degener. 2004. *Print Literacy Development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Attempting "a unified theory of literacy development," the authors examine cognitive development and processes within the context of social and cultural perspectives on literacy practices.

Stanovich, Keith E. 2000. *Progress in Understanding Reading*. New York: Guilford Press.

A retrospective account of Stanovich's work in reading, this book discusses phonological sensitivity, the role of context in reading, IQ, and word recognition in reading skill and comprehension. It revisits some of Stanovich's early work focused on the "Matthews Effect" and word recognition.

Applied Theory, Classroom Materials, and Strategies

Allen, Janet. 2000. *Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4–12.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse Press.

Allen offers strategies for establishing comprehensive literacy instruction. Beginning with reading aloud, moving next to shared and then to guided reading, students are able to become independent readers. Appendices include graphic organizers as well as websites and other professional resources.

Beers, Kylene. 2003. *When Kids Can't Read: A Guide for Teachers 6–12.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Beers promotes the teaching of comprehension strategies—before, during, and after reading. Chapters include useful specifics in "debriefing the strategy" and "putting the strategy to work." Appendix topics include spelling development, phonics generalizations, and suggested books.

Burke, Jim. 2000. *Reading Reminders: Tools, Tips and Techniques.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This book is divided into two sections, "What Teachers Do" and "What Students Do, each containing tools, tips, and techniques for its audience. Both the rationales and the procedures are explained for each tool, tip, or technique. Appendices include Language Arts Content Standards (for California), standards across the disciplines, reading surveys, and more.

_____. 2001. *Illuminating Texts: How to Teach Students to Read the World.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The premise of this book is that how we read is defined by what we read. Each chapter addresses a type of text—Internet, textbooks, tests, literature, information, and images—and the strategies that students need to read it. Samples of student work can be found at the website www.englishcompanion.com/illuminating.

Harvey, Stephanie. 1998. *Nonfiction Matters: Reading, Writing, and Research in Grades 3–8.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Harvey guides the teacher through the process of teaching "nonfiction inquiry" (grades 3–8): developing compelling questions, researching, reading nonfiction, getting it down on paper, and pulling it together. She emphasizes the reading/writing connection. Nonfiction books are listed in the appendix.

Harvey, Stephanie, and Anne Goudvis. 2007. *Strategies That Work*: *Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement*, 2nd ed. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Harvey and Goudvis advocate strategic reading in which students become aware of what they are doing while they read and learn how to repair comprehension when it breaks down. The authors also build the notion of "gradual release of responsibility" into their strategies.

Irvin, Judith L., Doug Buehl, and Ronald Klemp. 2006. *Reading and the High School Student: Strategies to Enhance Literacy*, 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

This text is divided into sections on instructional and programmatic concerns. Theory is cited as background for the techniques and strategies presented.

Moore, David W., and Kathleen A. Hinchman. 2003. *Starting Out: A Guide to Teaching Adolescents Who Struggle with Reading.* New York: Allyn & Bacon.

Aimed at future and new teachers of grades 6–12, this book explores arranging the classroom to encourage reading engagement, launching units of instruction, reading in all content areas, connecting to home and community, assessing students' reading, improving literacy schoolwide, and more.

Mueller, Pamela. 2001. *Lifers: Learning from At-Risk Adolescent Readers.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Mueller argues that students tracked into remedial reading come to see themselves as "lifers" in these programs, perpetual nonreaders. She proposes and outlines a reading workshop approach for these students.

Palincsar, Annemarie Sullivan, and Ann. L. Brown. 1983. *Reciprocal Teaching of Comprehension-Monitoring Activities.* Technical Report No 269. Champaign, IL: Center for the Study of Reading.

This report details the theory and method for reciprocal teaching, in which teachers model how to talk about text and monitor comprehension. Gradually students take on more responsibility, eventually becoming independent. The strategy has teachers model questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting.

Robb, Laura. 2000. *Teaching Reading in the Middle School.* New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

Robb emphasizes seven metacognitive strategies for teachers to model and teach to students. Integrating these strategies throughout, she discusses reading workshops, reading groups, cross-age reading projects, and more. Included are supporting handouts, checklists, and samples of student work and discussions.

Schoenbach, Ruth, Cynthia Greenleaf, Christine Cziko, and Lori Hurwitz. 1999. *Reading for Understanding: A Guide to Improving Reading in Middle and High School Classrooms.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Concerned with students' need to read academic texts, this book argues for a "reading apprenticeship" model in which "a more proficient other" demonstrates the "hidden cognitive dimensions" of reading. *Reading for Understanding* includes samples of student work and classroom activities for strategic reading and metacognitive processes.

Strickland, Dorothy S., and Donna E. Alvermann. 2004. *Bridging the Literacy Gap, Grades 4–12.* New York: Teachers College Press.

This book addresses critical issues related to preadolescent and adolescent literacy learners, with a focus on closing the achievement gap. Part I of this volume contains essential background information about specific populations of learners who are not achieving as well as expected. Part II provides descriptions of promising programs.

Sturtevant, Elizabeth G., Fenice B. Boyd, William G. Brozo, Kathleen A. Hinchman, David W. Moore, and Donna E. Alvermann. 2006. *Principled Practices for Adolescent Literacy: A Framework for Instruction and Policy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

The authors detail eight principles for adolescent literacy instruction: opportunities for choice; respect; expression of ideas; high expectations; variety in texts and purposes for reading; self-direction and assessment; critical perspectives; and connecting reading with life outside of school.

Tovani, Cris. 2000. *I Read It, But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Tovani promotes double-entry diaries, marking texts, and comprehension constructors (maps or sets of instructions for a reading). She explains strategies such as visualizing, predicting, inferring, connecting "new to known," and inquiry-based classes.

Wilhelm, Jeffrey D., Tanya N. Baker, and Julie Dube. 2001. *Strategic Reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This text includes a chart of strategies for assisting readers to independence. Strategies emphasized are frontloading, students' questioning and discussing, and the Symbolic

Story Representation (SRI). Also included are chapters on setting goals and sequencing reading (and writing) assignments and "Reading Buddies" projects.

Zimmermann, Susan, and Ellin Oliver Keene. 1997. *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The authors look at the role of inference and questioning as two important cognitive strategies that result in synthesis. The text advocates teachers' active modeling of metacognitive reading strategies and "a gradual release of responsibility" to the student.

Reading Comprehension and Issues of Culture, Class, Race, and Gender

Au, Kathryn H. 1998. "Social Constructivism and the School Literacy Learning of Students of Diverse Backgrounds*." Journal of Literacy Research* 30 (2): 297–319. Available online at http://www.nrconline.org/jlr/archive/v30/article_30_2_7.pdf.

This article addresses the gap between the literacy achievement of students from diverse cultures, races, and social classes and that of mainstream students. Au argues that to bridge the gap, educators need to reconsider the role of the home language, the goals of instruction, the materials and methods used in class, the relationship of home to school, the methods of assessment, and the relationship of the teacher to students. She provides examples throughout of what these reconsiderations would entail.

Lee, Carol D. 2001. "Is October Brown Chinese? A Cultural Modeling Activity System for Underachieving Students." *American Educational Research Journal* 38 (1): 97–141.

Lee describes how underachieving students positively respond to literacy classes that draw on the funds of knowledge that they bring from home and community experiences.

Moll, L., C. Amanti, D. Neff, and N. Gonzalez. 1992. "Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: A Qualitative Approach for Connecting Households and Classrooms." *Theory into Practice* 31 (2): 132–41.

The authors argue that teachers should recognize and build upon students' ways with language and literacy from their home cultures and communities.

Smith, Michael W., and Jeffrey D. Wilhelm. 2002. *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.

Smith and Wilhelm are interested in the problems boys face with reading and writing in school. The book discusses how reading can be made less "schoolish" and more like the

"healthy work" that many young men appreciate outside of school. *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys* explores inquiry-based units.

Tatum, Alfred. 2005. *Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males: Closing the Achievement Gap*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Tatum argues for reading classes that are culturally responsive in the texts that are chosen and the methods that are used. He adapts metacognitive strategies, vocabulary instruction, and writing assignments to engage Black adolescent male students.

Reading Comprehension and English Language Learners: Texts Recommended by the NWP ELL Network.

August, Diane, and Timothy Shanahan, eds. 2006. *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

The National Literacy Panel was charged with identifying, assessing, and synthesizing the research on literacy and language-minority students. Second-language literacy development was considered in a multidimensional framework. The studies were divided accordingly into categories: developmental perspectives, sociocultural variables, classroom and school factors, and assessment.

Peregoy, Suzanne F., and Owen F. Boyle. 2000 "English Learners Reading English: What We Know, What We Need to Know." *Theory into Practice* 39 (4): 237–24

This article starts from the premise that ELL students have diverse backgrounds that affect their learning to read in English. Factors to consider include the learner's first-language literacy, the orthography and syntax of the learner's first language, and the learner's world knowledge and familiarity with a variety of text structures and purposes for reading.

Short, Deborah, and Shannon Fitzsimmons. 2006, November. *Double the Work: Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Available at http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/DoubleWork/DoubleWork.pdf.

Adolescent ELLs have double the work of their native English–speaking peers; ELL students are acquiring English while they are studying core content area in this second language. While emphasizing the diversity of ELL students themselves, this report recommends improved assessment, teacher training, and capacity building; appropriate

program offerings and teaching practices; and a coherent research agenda. The report describes the problems for ELL students and suggests solutions of interest to teachers, administrators, and researchers.

Content-Area Literacy and Reading Comprehension

Content Area Literacy, part of University of Connecticut's Literacy Web.
   http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/contlit.htm

This Web page includes links to reading strategies, curriculum, materials, and lesson plans by T.W. Bean, the Content Area Literacy Consortium, and The Center for Advancement in Learning.

Daniels, Harvey, and Steven Zemelman. 2004. *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The authors discuss effective and appropriate use of textbooks and adapt such classroom practices as reading workshops, inquiry units, and book clubs for content-area classes.

Harvey, Stephanie. 1998. *Nonfiction Matters.* Portland, ME. Stenhouse.

Harvey gives detailed plans, strategies, and curriculum for doing inquiry units with nonfiction. Applicable to all content areas.

Lapp, Diane, James Flood, and Nancy Farnan, eds. 2008. *Content Area Reading and Learning*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This collection of articles includes a "state of the art" overview by T.W. Bean and Helen Harper, pieces for specific content areas, and special topics such as English language learners, motivation, assessment, vocabulary development, and school culture.

Literacy and Learning

Cambourne, Brian. 2002. "The Conditions of Literacy Learning." *The Reading Teacher* 55 (8): 758–762.

Cambourne uses Jean Lave and James Gee's work with situated learning to explain scenarios and principles of learning that occurs through participation in activities. Skills take on meaning and are acquired in the "context of the whole," and many of the learning situations resemble apprenticeships.

Gee, James Paul. 2003. *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Literacy and Learning.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gee uses video games as an example of ideal learning situations. From this, he extrapolates learning principles that can guide teachers in their work in literacy.

Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lave and Wenger lay out a theory of learning in the context of activity through participation and informal apprenticeship ("legitimate peripheral participation").

Journals

***The Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy,* International Reading Association.**

This journal has been published since 1957 (first as the *Journal of Developmental Reading*, then as the *Journal of Reading*, 1964–1995). Since 1995, this journal has focused on adolescents and adult literacy development. Features include "books for adolescents," "classroom materials," and "technology." Articles focus on issues such as engaging middle school readers, strategies for reading in the content areas, and cross-cultural and ELD perspectives on motivation and engagement.

***Reading Research Quarterly*, International Reading Association.**

Reports on a wide variety of research into reading development: how parental beliefs about reading influence development; how teacher knowledge about reading influences teaching practices; and how teaching "morphemic contexts" to ELD students improves comprehension.

***The Reading Teacher,* International Reading Association.**

This journal focuses on reading development for ages one to twelve. It offers classroom-based research and ideas for curriculum, classroom activities, and assessment. It includes features such as the "politics of reading," "teaching ideas" and information for culturally and linguistically diverse classes.