

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Volume 2 no 2, the spring/summer issue of the *Connecticut Reading Association Journal*. This issue brings eleven exciting articles with a range of topics, most of which will support your work in implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

FEATURE ARTICLES

We have four feature articles; three focus on aspects of the CCSS. The last feature article proposes a unique way of organizing for literacy instruction with children.

Shane Templeton, co-author of the *Words Their Way* series, indicates that foundational skills are outlined in the CCSS, but he expresses concern that they may not receive their due diligence because they are not assessed by Smarter Balance. In *Foundational Literacy Skills in the Context of the Common Core: Learning What Words Are and How Words Work*, he outlines what must be taught and learned to successfully launch emergent learners.

In *Using Shared Reading and Close Reading to Bridge Intervention and the Common Core*, Karen C. Waters brings us into a fourth grade teacher's classroom to see how a five-day intervention is implemented for struggling readers to bridge intervention and the CCSS.

Next, Rachael Gabriel proposes dramatic strategies, building on the work of actor/theater director Constantin Stanislavski to promote fluency and a deep understanding of text. In her article, *Stanislavski and the Common Core*, she describes how this dramatic approach immerses readers in the text, requiring close reading, structural and character analysis.

The last feature article by Katina L. Thomas departs from classroom strategies related to the CCSS. Instead it focuses on organizing for literacy instruction. Thomas makes a cogent, yet provocative argument, for departmentalization for second graders in *Departmentalized Reading in the Second Grade? Yes!*

DEPARTMENTS

In the **Children's and Young Adult Literature Department**, we are introduced to the work of children's literature and young adult author Padma Venkatraman. In *Spending time with Padma Venkatraman*, Lynda M. Valerie asks stimulating questions that help us to learn about this amazing author's oeuvre and her approach to writing.

The next article is actually written by Venkatraman and her colleagues, Diane Kern and Kathryn L. Johnson. In *Teaching Nonviolence in English Methods Seminar: Climbing the Stairs to the High School Classroom*, we learn how the theme of nonviolence can be integrated into Venkatraman's *Climbing the Stairs*, a compelling book that takes place in India during World War II. Middle school and high school teachers will find some valuable teaching resources to inspire critical analysis in light of gender equity as well.

Critical Literacy for Younger Learners: A Conceptual Model and Classroom Implications is an outstanding article written by Katharine Covino for our **Critical Literacy Department**. As her title suggests, she provides a conceptual framework that will guide teachers and their learners to examine "their worlds, their texts and themselves."

In the **Teacher Research Department**, we have two companion articles. First off, in *The Inner Workings of a Teacher Research Group: Exploring Our Passions, Supporting Each Other, and Improving Our Teaching*, Cathy Fleischer provides a context for the work that a cadre of teacher researchers do in their ongoing Teacher Research Group. In particular, she gives us a bit of background on Lisa Eddy's work.

Lisa eddy's *The Role of Teacher Research in Rising to the Challenge of IB Literature* walks us through her rationale, data collection, and analysis of one student's response to using a multi-genre approach to writing within the International Baccalaureate setting. Clearly, eddy's work rises to the challenge of using teacher research to inform instruction.

The first article in the **New Literacies Department** is *Using Collaborative Online Writing Among Middle Level Learners to Address a Complex Text: Blogging about The Giver* by Lisa A. Zawilinski and Laurie M. Henry. The authors address the need to provide experiences in new literacies with preservice teachers by having them model and facilitate dialogue among seventh graders in response to Lois Lowry's *The Giver*. They present this blogging project to demonstrate how teachers might use blogs to enhance reading comprehension.

Why teach our students coding and computational thinking? Authors, Jenny Lussier, Lindsay Petroski, and Michelle Gohagon address this question and provide compelling arguments for why it will empower our 21st Century students. In *Coding and Comprehension: Reading, Thinking and Empowering 21st Century Students*, the authors provide resources for those who would like to get started in introducing this new skill that will impact their students' futures.

We hope you enjoy this issue along with the warm spring turning to summer weather.

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Editor, *Connecticut Reading Association Journal*

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Associate Editor, *Connecticut Reading Association Journal*



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Professional Highlights:

President-elect of Connecticut Reading Association
Conference Chair for CRA Annual Conference (2013)

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

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

Conference Chair for the NERA Annual Conference (2008)

Editor of the *New England Reading Association Journal* 2001-2008

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

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



KENNETH J. WEISS, Ed.D received his doctorate in Reading from Rutgers University and is Professor Emeritus of Reading and Language Arts (Central Connecticut State University, where he taught undergraduate and graduate courses in reading/literacy education). Ken is a frequent presenter at international, national and regional professional conferences. He serves as a member of the Board of Examiners for NCATE and is a past president and conference chair of CRA. Ken's research interests continue to focus around the use of technology as it relates to 21st century learners as well as in the areas of children's literature and content area literacy instruction.