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Michelle Devereaux
Kennesaw State University, GA

Amanda Otto
Kennesaw State University, GA

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“But I Don’t Teach Reading”: An annotated Bibliography Focusing on Helping Educators of all Subjects Teach Reading

**Michelle Devereaux and Amanda Otto
Kennesaw State University, GA**

“I teach high school students. They know *how* to read.” Unfortunately, this belief is a common misconception shared by many secondary teachers. We assume by the time teens reach us, they can read. While most *can* read words, a good number do not comprehend well, especially when confronted with informational texts. Compounding this problem is the fact many students who read well, particularly boys, choose *not* to read. Another misconception about teaching reading in secondary schools usually comes from content area teachers: “I teach one subject, not reading.” Unfortunately, this fallacy began because many content area teachers are not prepared to teach students how to read textbooks.

Whether we teach math, science, social studies or English/language arts, we all have struggling readers and non-readers. We cannot give up on them. Despite grade, content area, or ability level, all students need instruction in becoming proficient readers.

In this annotated bibliography, teachers of all disciplines will find useful information including lesson plans, graphic organizers, approaches to assessment, discussion circles, reading lists that motivate students, and classroom management tools. Anecdotes from experienced teachers and researchers shed light on classroom problems and show teachers they are not alone in fostering life-long literacy.

Lifelong Literacy

Allen, Janet. *It's Never Too Late: Leading Adolescents to Lifelong Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995.

This book is a must for every teacher who strives to create a literate environment. Allen shares her struggles and triumphs and lays out successful steps for creating better readers. The appendix includes research methodologies, surveys, assessments, and interview surveys which are all copy-friendly and easily transferable across grade levels.

Baker, Tanya N., Julie Dube, and Jeffrey D. Wilhelm. *Strategic Reading: Guiding Students to Lifelong Literacy 6-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

This text focuses on middle and high school English students and how teachers can effectively teach reading. Filled with pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading ideas, *Strategic Reading* offers helpful lessons to assist English teachers in teaching comprehension and fostering reading enjoyment. Based on the theories of Vygotsky and Hilcocks, this text gives step-by-step instructions and helpful models for the classroom.

Beers, Kylene and Barbara G. Samuels. *Into Focus: Understanding and Creating Middle School Readers*. Norwood: Christopher- Gordon, 1998.^o

Comprised of twenty-two essays by teachers and professors, this informative book is divided by five themes: 1) middle school students, 2) responding to texts, 3) comprehension, 4) materials, and 5) teachers. Though many of the essays are geared toward middle school students, secondary teachers will find this book useful in creating thematic units and literature discussions. It also offers ideas for journaling.

Serafini, Frank and Cyndi Giorgis. *Reading Aloud and Beyond: Fostering the Intellectual Life with Older Readers*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003.

Serafini and Giorgis show that reading aloud to students is as essential for secondary students as it is for elementary students. Concise chapters, divided into two parts, explain read aloud procedures. Part I clarifies how to choose texts, how to relate texts with other curriculum areas, and how to generate discussions. Part II is packed with during reading and post-reading discussion and activity ideas, as well as ideas for assessment. For teachers unfamiliar or uncomfortable with using read alouds at the high school level, Chapter 12 provides a ten-step process to becoming more skilled with using read alouds as instructional tools.

Content Area Classroom

Alverman, Donna A. *Content Reading and Literacy: Succeeding in Today's Diverse Classrooms*. Needham Heights: Viacom, 1998.

While all content area teachers will find this text useful in teaching reading for specific subjects, teachers of diverse populations will find more valuable information. A chapter dedicated to language, diversity, and culture, along with subtopics in all chapters dealing with these issues help prepare teachers for the challenges they face in diverse classrooms. Though this text focuses on ideas rather than definite strategies, appendices offer a detailed list of read aloud books for all subject areas.

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

Students today have more than books to read and comprehend. Now they have the Internet and various forms of video and media. This book demonstrates how to teach these new 21st century "texts" with classroom assignments and questions, handouts ready for copying, etc. Each chapter focuses on one of the

mentioned topics and delves into how and why English teachers need to be aware of these multi-genred texts. Whether one reads three pages or the entire book, all teachers can take something from this book to use in their English classroom.

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

Emphasizing the importance of educating all content area teachers in promoting lifelong literacy, Daniels and Zemelman give over twenty practical classroom activities for specific subject areas. Two main focuses of the book are what the authors consider as main reading problems in the secondary subject fields: students reading the wrong material, and students not understanding what they read. To fix these problems, cognitive strategies that promote comprehension are provided. Teachers can find ideas that range from book clubs and independent reading to cross-curricular units within this text.

Gunning, Thomas G. *Building Literacy in the Content Area*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003.

From reading skills to vocabulary, to reading and writing in each content area, Gunning provides fourteen chapters to cover all aspects of teaching reading in grades K-12. Each chapter has highlighted vocabulary words defined in the margins to help teachers completely understand the jargon they will need to be successful content area reading teachers. The margins also offer websites to correlate with the information in the text, as well as hints for teaching struggling readers and English language learners. Throughout the text, Gunning supplies sample step-by-step lessons focusing on vocabulary, comprehension writing and study skills to be used in the content area class. Teachers looking for specific titles for their content will find the graded list of content area trade books beneficial.

Richek, Margaret Ann, JoAnne Schudt Caldwell, Joyce Holt Jennings, and Janet W. Lerner. *Reading*

Problems: Assessment and Teaching Strategies.
Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002.

While the entire text is practical for teachers with struggling readers, the four appendices give teachers what they want: specific instructional materials, tests, and informal reading inventories. Most chapters include snapshot strategies—a brief description of an actual suggested strategy being used so teachers can see the outcome. Content area teacher will find Chapter 9, “Improving Comprehension of Expository Text,” most helpful, for it gives strategies for helping students read these texts and assessment suggestions. Those teachers looking for answers to reading disabilities must read Chapters 14 and 15, for these deal with reading disabilities and instructional methods for special needs students.

Sturtevant, Elizabeth G. and Wayne M. Linek.
Content Literacy: An Inquiry-Based Case Approach.
Pearson: Columbus, 2004.

Sturtevant and Linek take a different approach in explaining the practice of teaching content literacy through a qualitative research process combined with case-study methodology. The text is broken into four parts: 1) an introduction to content literacy, 2) case studies, 3) planning for action research, 3) and resources. The seven case studies range from high school biology to sixth grade world history to ESOL. The content area handbook is a book on its own as it provides all the teaching and learning strategies in the chapters (e.g., K-W-Ls, graphic organizers for expository texts). All strategies are paired with the national standards and goals for each content area. Appropriate for all grade levels and all subjects.

Unrau, Norman. *Content Area Reading and Writing: Fostering Literacies in Middle and High School Cultures.* Columbus: Pearson, 2004.

Unrau has written a very educational text for all content area teachers. With chapters focusing on critical reading, assessments, vocabulary, and

collaborative work, Unrau helps ease teachers’ fears of content area reading. Most chapters feature specific step-by-step instructions explaining how to implement Unrau’s strategies. Teachers with reluctant and struggling readers will find Chapter 9 most helpful. A very useful aspect of the text is the companion Website, which provides self-quizzes for students, a message board for teachers and various forms of assessment.

Language Arts Classroom

Austin, Carol, Lynn Meeks. *Literacy in the Secondary English Classroom: Strategies for the Way Kids Learn.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003.

A realistic guide to the secondary English classroom, this text examines the theory and tools necessary to create a successful, literate environment.

Collaboration, wall texts, guided reading and writing, and text tapping are a few of the techniques the authors offer. The reader will encounter new ideas and helpful examples to bring each idea into his/her classroom.

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

With 100 strategies, this text is a must-have for every English teacher. Each strategy includes a rationale, instructions and examples for easy use. Ranging from vocabulary to read alouds, from how to read different texts to graphic organizers, this book allows teachers to reach past the read, question, answer trap of teaching high school English.

Foster, Harold. *Crossing Over: Whole Language for Secondary English Teachers.* New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994.

Most English teachers are familiar with the term *whole language*. Yet, how many actually know what it means, how it is taught, or what methods work

best? *Crossing Over* answers these questions and introduces not only the how but the why of whole language. Laid out in three sections, the first examines the historical roots and theories of whole language. In the second section, the author looks at the classroom and lays out tips for reading and writing by the whole language method. The third section contains narratives from teachers who have succeeded using the whole language method and tips in setting up a whole language classroom. Though an older text, this work paints a strong picture of the value of holistic instruction.

Pirie, Bruce. *Teenage Boys and High School English*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.

According to research, a gap in English academia has always existed between boys and girls; statistically, boys are not as successful in the English classroom. While many English teachers have found this problem a difficult hurdle, Pirie offers real-life solutions. Based on physiology, sociology, linguistics, and educational research, this book explains why boys succeed differently and how teachers can help them achieve. With qualitative and quantitative research included, every teacher will find helpful information in this unique text

Rau, Shirley and Driek Zirinsky. *A Classroom of Teenaged Readers: Nurturing Reading Processes in Senior High English*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 2001.°

Rau and Zirinsky help teachers understand the difference in knowing *about* literature and knowing how to *read* literature. The authors begin by explaining a teenagers' natural reading process, since many teachers believe students should know how to read by the time they are in secondary classes. They then proceed to give two frameworks: sustaining the natural reading of teenagers and nurturing teenaged readers. Handouts, strategies, assessments, and

activities are included to help teachers and schools create classrooms that focus on the student.°

Steineke, Nancy. *Reading & Writing Together: Collaborative Literacy in Action*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.

This text is a real-world guide for the high school English classroom. Giving teachers step-by-step guidelines, Steineke leads the reader toward an interactive and productive classroom environment. Focusing on positive student interaction, reading strategies, and conferencing, Steineke includes handouts and helpful tips in this teacher-friendly guide for fostering a successful and literate English classroom.

Farris, Pamela, Pamela Fuhler, and Maria Walther. *Teaching Reading: A Balanced Approach For Today's Classrooms*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004.

A text for elementary, middle, and high school English teachers, *Teaching Reading* examines dozens of topics from phonics to genres, and each chapter allows for reflection by providing a section with "questions to ponder." Designed as a textbook, the reader will find information easily accessible and concise. Including specific classroom reading and writing ideas, this text will allow a student teacher or a tenured teacher to improve curriculum and classroom attitude by implementing the well-laid ideas found here.

Young Adult Novels

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

Teachers looking for strategies of promoting lifelong literacy among their students as well as teaching comprehension in content areas need this book. Allen's research-based methods answer questions

about literacy problems. The text includes chapters on reading aloud in the primary years, shared reading, guided reading, offering choice, and ideas for writing. Chapter 12, "Full Circle: Assessing, Evaluating, and Starting Again," provides teachers with alternative assessment options. Allen's wonderful eight appendices include Website lesson plans, books on tape, and poetry collection lists.

Monsaeu, Virginia R. and Gary M. Salvner. *Reading Their World: The Young Adult Novel in the Classroom*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 2000.^o

A collection of pragmatic essays written by professors and young adult authors, that discuss how to read, write and teach the young adult novel. This book helps teachers examine their teaching of both the classics and young adult literature. With the increased acceptance of young adult literature into classrooms, teachers need to be prepared for any issue that might arise from the novels. Topics addressed include themes found in novels, the classics, diversity, and gender roles in young adult literature.

Wilhelm, Jeffery. *'You Gotta BE the Book': Teaching Engaged and Reflective Reading with Adolescents*. New York: Teachers College P, 1997.

From the why to the how, Wilhelm plots how to create a literate classroom environment and lays the plan in this teacher-friendly guide. Questions are answered ("Why read?") and lesson plans are given in detail. Wilhelm focuses on the use of visual and dramatic responses to literature but does not neglect teacher and student roles in the creation of a literate classroom. This book is ideal for new teachers learning how to create a lively classroom, or seasoned teachers wishing to spice up their curriculum.

Reluctant Readers

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

Teachers working with at-risk adolescents will find this text extremely useful since many teachers struggle with teaching at-risk students. Mueller's book is split into two helpful parts: the students and ways to help them. She provides three case studies on very different at-risk adolescents and then proceeds to give four workshops on how to help them. She offers appendices to go along with the workshops, as well as weekly progress reports and letters informing parents about the workshops.

Reynolds, Marilyn. *I Won't Read and You Can't Make Me: Reaching Reluctant Teen Readers*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2004.

Marilyn Reynolds answers the question all English teachers have: How do I motivate a reluctant reader? She gives all teachers a better understanding of what makes a reader reluctant with personal anecdotes and, most importantly, her "Tricks of the Trade" particularly designed for teachers working with reluctant readers. Not only does Reynolds explicitly explain how to use her tricks, but she also supplies graphic organizers and discussion questions, along with a list of books categorized by topics of interest to reluctant readers.

About the Authors:

Michelle Devereaux is a teacher at Hiram High School in Hiram, Georgia; she currently teaches 9th grade repeater and British Literature. Her research interest is motivating reluctant learners in her classroom. She received her masters in Adolescent Education at Kennesaw State University.

Amanda Otto is a teacher at Norcross High School in Norcross, Georgia; she currently teaches 9th and 10th grade Technical English. In her research she focuses on motivating the reluctant learners in her classroom. She received her masters in Adolescent Education at Kennesaw State University.