



Sacred Heart  
UNIVERSITY

Sacred Heart University  
DigitalCommons@SHU

---

Education Faculty Publications

Isabelle Farrington College Of Education

---

Spring 2014

# Using Shared Reading and Close Reading to Bridge Intervention and the Common Core

Karen C. Waters  
*Sacred Heart University*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/ced\\_fac](http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/ced_fac)

 Part of the [Educational Methods Commons](#), [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Waters, Karen C. "Using Shared Reading and Close Reading to Bridge Intervention and the Common Core." Connecticut Reading Association Journal 2.2 (Spr/Sum 2014): 9-22.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Isabelle Farrington College Of Education at DigitalCommons@SHU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@SHU. For more information, please contact [ferribyp@sacredheart.edu](mailto:ferribyp@sacredheart.edu).



## Using Shared Reading and Close Reading to Bridge Intervention and the Common Core

Karen C. Waters, Ed.D., Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT



While classroom teachers are grappling with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and its implications for instruction in the core curriculum, designing effective intervention to meet the needs of diverse struggling readers poses another challenge, especially because Response to Intervention (RTI) as an instructional framework frequently emphasizes the teaching of discrete skills. Experts have concluded that intervention focusing primarily on foundational skills without instruction in comprehension is not only contrary to literacy research, but also antithetical to the shift to contextualized literacy instruction, resulting in fragmented instruction for those most in need. At the same time, inherent within both CCSS and RTI is the goal for students to read increasingly complex texts. While the CCSS presumes the internalization of the foundational skills to identify the central ideas and themes of a text, isolated skill instruction continues to dominate RTI.

Bridging the divide between RTI and the CCSS will require thoughtful

and deliberate scaffolding to provide universal access for all students. Two approaches for advancing student reading achievement include the time-honored strategy of *shared reading* and not-quite-as-familiar-strategy of *close reading*, which provide the pedagogical anchors for this article. Though the parameters separating the two formats are not clear-cut, *shared reading* emphasizes accurate and fluent oral reading through repeated readings, while *close reading* focuses on deep comprehension of main ideas and central themes by returning to the text. Combined use of these strategies within the traditional intervention format just might provide the link from tiered instruction to the core curriculum and a transition from the development of fundamental skills to purposeful, critical reading.

Response to Intervention (RTI), a comprehensive framework for enhancing the reading achievement of all students (Lipson, Chomsky-Higgins, & Kanfer, 2011), has evolved as a national initiative characterized by research-based practices, extended instructional time, differentiated

instruction, progress monitoring, dynamic assessment, and data driven-decision-making (Gunning, 2006, Weishar & Weishar, 2012; Wixson & Valencia, 2011). Unfortunately, the tailoring of a unique intervention plan is an infrequent occurrence. Allington (2013) and Scanlon (2013) claimed that intervention does not necessarily consider the research in teaching students to read. In fact, Scanlon (2013) asserted that while districts ascribe to the framework of RTI, mere participation in pull-out skills-based intervention does not guarantee accelerated reading achievement for the student.

As districts hasten to carry out the CCSS in their mission to deepen student comprehension of complex text and increase the quality and quantity of student writing, differentiating instruction for the lowest-performing students takes on an added dimension. The implications of the CCSS on existing curriculum and instruction, and the extent to which it impacts intervention is uncertain (McLaughlin, M. & Overturf, B., 2012). Wanting to teach students to “read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 10), teachers are speculative about using “stretch” texts that were previously considered to be too difficult for most students (Stahl, 2012). They ponder the question: How do I balance the developmental needs of my struggling students while

They ponder the question: How do I balance the developmental needs of my struggling students while meeting the challenge of the CCSS to infuse my lessons with complex text? However, with the Common Core’s “vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century,” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 3) there is renewed interest in the utilization of specific pedagogies that will develop skills in reading and writing to address the anchor standards.

meeting the challenge of the CCSS to infuse my lessons with complex text? However, with the Common Core’s “vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century,” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 3) there is renewed interest in the utilization of specific pedagogies that will develop skills in reading and writing to address the anchor standards.

### Purpose

The purpose of this article is to examine the possibilities for customizing interventions to meet the needs of lower-achieving students by revisiting the instructional routines of *shared reading* to contextualize the teaching of foundational skills within appropriately-challenging text, and *close reading* as a meaning-making tool by which students deepen comprehension. First, the features of each strategy are described, and a theoretical rationale considers the integration of *shared reading* and *close reading* in designing effective intervention emanating from core instruction. An instructional framework linking both strategies includes a 5-day plan for working with a group of fourth grade struggling readers, inclusive of special needs students. Finally, a vision considers not only considers the creation of culturally relevant pedagogy and a merging of intervention with the CCSS, but also the implications of a rejuvenated assessment system to address the needs of all students.

### A Closer Look at the Features of Shared Reading and Close Reading

The research-based *shared reading experience* (SRE) (Holdaway, 1979) and *close reading* (Fisher & Frey, 2012) are two instructional routines, rooted in constructivism, that hold promise for bridging the divide between intervention and core instruction. Originally intended as a format to

increase fluency and accuracy in oral reading for emergent readers, the *shared reading experience* (Holdaway, 1979) has evolved and expanded to encompass a variety of lessons for the explicit teaching of comprehension, vocabulary, text features and text structures, which has been successful in meeting the developmental needs of older struggling readers (Stahl, 2012). The work of Fisher, Frey and Lapp (2008, 2012), and Stahl (2012) in *shared* and *close reading* provided the inspiration for a combined protocol for teaching these foundational and meaning-making skills. A review of the individual elements comprising both strategies reveals a blurring of the parameters between *shared* and *close reading* for navigating the demands of increasingly complex text. However, the component of teacher modeling (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2008), establishes *shared reading* as the precursor to the integration and assimilation of skills required for deep comprehension (Stahl, 2012).

### Shared Reading

Explicit teaching of text structure, text features, vocabulary and comprehension (Stahl, 2012) are addressed through repeated readings. Foundational skills and word work activities are extracted from the text and then contextualized to ensure cohesion among skills. In *shared reading*, teachers use think-alouds to show their thought process, and provide fluent models of oral reading as students follow along with copies of the text. Students then pose questions, discuss central themes with a partner, and construct written responses to the text. Implemented initially as a read-aloud using a “stretch” text that may be too difficult, *shared reading* scaffolds instruction in a gradual release model that ultimately enables the learner to read the story with little teacher assistance (2012).

The benefits of *shared reading* notwithstanding, the preponderance of legislative mandates and reform policies of the last decade have succeeded in diminishing *shared reading* practices at the elementary level (Fisher et al., 2008). However, with renewed emphasis on reading for meaning and a “vision of what it means to be literate person in the twenty-first century,” (CCSSO, 2010, p. 3) teachers are now forced to reexamine those components of the daily reading block that will “develop the skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening” (p. 3). Returning to the time-honored and evidence-based practice of *shared reading* for developing fluent oral reading through repeated readings of the same text (Eldredge, Reutzler, & Hollingsworth, 1996, cited by Stahl, 2012) can have significant benefits for all students, regardless of their level of instruction. Table 1 provides a 5-day plan for *shared reading* that targets specific areas of comprehension, vocabulary, text structure and text features.

### Close Reading

Whereas *shared reading* emphasizes the rereading of text to develop fluency, the instructional routine of *close reading* presumes the internalization of the foundational skills of decoding and academic vocabulary in order to focus on the deeper meaning of text. However, to assume that *close reading* enters where *shared reading* leaves off is perhaps an oversimplification of both strategies; suffice to say that the repeated readings associated with *close reading* emphasize critical analysis of what Fisher and Frey (2012) refer to as the “deep structures” (p. 179) of text. Internal text structures, the exactness of the author’s word choices, the implicit and the explicit messages, and how the reader connects ideas within a text and in combination with other texts to construct his own beliefs and knowledge are the features

Table 1: *Incorporating Shared Reading into 5-Day Plan adapted from Shared Reading Components, Fisher, Frey & Lapp (2008, p. 551).*

Focus Area in Shared Reading	Application of CCSS	5-Day Plan for Shared Reading with <i>The Boy Who Drew Cats</i> (Hodges, 2002) <i>Duration: 20 minutes</i>	Strategies and Skills
<b>Comprehension</b>	<p><b>CCSS.CCRA.SL.1.</b> Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (NGA &amp; CCSSO), 2010a, p. 24).</p> <p>c. Make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others (NGA &amp; CCSSO), 2010a, p. 24).</p> <p>d. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 24).</p> <p><b>CCSS Objective RL.1.4</b> Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences (NGA &amp; CCSSO), 2010a, p. 24).</p> <p><b>CCSS.CCRA.RL.2.</b> Determine central ideas of themes of a text and analyze their development ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p> <p><b>CCSS.CCRA.RL.3.</b> Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p>	<p><b>Day 1:</b> Interactive read-aloud. (Whole Class) Focus on obtaining overview of story through interactive read-aloud, encouraging students to draw inferences and making predictions from story content.</p> <p>Review elements of narrative story structure including main characters, setting, problem, solution, main events, solution, and theme in preparation for story map activity.</p> <p><b>Differentiating instruction for Tiers 2 &amp; 3:</b> Teacher listens to partnership discussions, checking for comprehension, and courage self-monitoring by reviewing story as necessary.</p>	<p>Drawing inferences</p> <p>Determining Importance</p> <p>Questioning</p> <p>Summarizing and Synthesizing</p> <p>Self-monitoring or fix-up strategies</p>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<p><b>CCSS.CCRA.RF. 4.3.</b> Know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 17).</p> <p><b>CCSS.CCRA.RL.4.</b> Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p>	<p><b>Word Work for Tiers 2 and 3</b></p> <p>Discussion of word parts, words, phrases, and sentence level cues to obtain meaning within the text.</p> <p>Have students discern Tier 2 vocabulary in context:</p> <p>priesthood (compound word)  margins (syllable type r-control)  possession (suffix – ion)  warriors (root word – war)  cautiously (suffixes – tious, ly)</p>	<p>Morphemic analysis (study of prefixes, suffixes, and roots), cognates, using context clues around unknown word to determine pronunciation and meaning.</p>

Focus Area in Shared Reading	Application of CCSS	5-Day Plan for Shared Reading with <i>The Boy Who Drew Cats</i> (Hodges, 2002) <i>Duration: 20 minutes</i>	Strategies and Skills
Text Structure	<p><b>CCSS.CCRA.RL.5.</b> Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. section, chapter, scene or stanza) relate to each other and the whole ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p> <p><b>CCSS.CCRA.R.6.</b> Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p>	<p>Organizational patterns in texts used to enhance the reader’s comprehension</p> <p><b>Day 2:</b> Teacher leads construction of a collaborative story map with entire class, which requires occasional review of concept of summarizing, evaluating, and questioning, to glean the main ideas and discern the most important information from the text. Reviews parts of text as necessary.</p> <p>In partners, students select another story read previously to summarize using story map terminology.</p> <p><b>Differentiating Instruction for Tiers 2 &amp; 3 on Day 2:</b> Teacher models point of view summarizing through somebody/wanted/but/so/and (Beers, 2003) using “<i>The Three Little Pigs.</i>”</p> <p>Students construct individual point-of-view summaries using abridged version of <i>The Boy Who Drew Cats</i> (Shephard, 1997).</p>	Narrative story structure: main character(s), setting, problem, solution, main events, resolution, theme
Comprehension	<p><b>CCSS.CCRA.R.1</b> Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p>	<p><b>Day 3:</b> (whole class) Model annotation using complex textual excerpt from <i>The Boy Who Drew Cats.</i></p> <p><b>Differentiating Instruction for Tiers 2 &amp; 3:</b> Teacher models annotation using abridged version of the same story. Students annotate text on a two-column format through a series of symbols, dialogue and arrows.</p>	Visualizing
	<p><b>See standards for Day 1.</b></p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA.CCRA.9.</b> Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p>	<p><b>Day 4:</b> (whole class) Interactive read-aloud using another version of <i>The Boy Who Drew Cats.</i> Deeper discussion of the commonalities and similarities of the two versions through the collaborative construction of a double-bubble map.</p> <p><b>Differentiating Instruction for Tiers 2 &amp; 3 on Day 4:</b> Students annotated <i>The Art Lesson</i> (DePaola, 1989) while focusing on the similarities and differences between the characters and the main events of the story.</p>	Accessing schema to aid in comprehension and in making connections between new and older information.

Focus Area in Shared Reading	Application of CCSS	5-Day Plan for Shared Reading with <i>The Boy Who Drew Cats</i> (Hodges, 2002) <i>Duration: 20 minutes</i>	Strategies and Skills
Text Features	<p><b>CCSS Objective RL.1.4</b> Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 12).</p> <p><b>CCSS.CCRA.RL.2.</b> Determine central ideas of themes of a text and analyze their development ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p> <p><b>CCSS.CCRA.RL.3.</b> Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p> <p><b>CCSS.CCRA.RL.4.</b> Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p>	<p><b>Day 5:</b> (whole class) Use house graphic to guide a close reading of excerpted text by focusing on particular words and phrases that the author uses to convey meaning.</p> <p>Students follow up in partners by going back to the text to add words to the graphic of the house that enhance their understanding of the story.</p>	Emphasis on literary devices: metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia, repetition, and foreshadowing.
Focus Area in Shared Reading	<p><b>CCSS.ELA.CCRA.7.</b> Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</p>	<p><b>Day 5:</b> Using a illustration from the text to teach tone and mood. What is happening in the story on page 8? What can you infer from the relationship between the main characters from the expressions on their faces? In what ways do the illustrations on page 7 &amp; 8 contribute to your understanding about the tone and mood of the story?</p>	Elements of a text that contribute to the reader's overall understanding of the content presented.

that undergird the concept of *close reading*. Although Table 2 summarizes the features of *close reading*, it is by no means is it an exhaustive list.

**Zone of Proximal Development**

Inherent within both methodologies is Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), the province between what a learner can do independently and the level of proficiency that can be attained through expert coaching. Additionally, the

flexible pedagogies of *shared* and *close reading* invite inclusive, scaffolded, and multiple ways to accommodate students' needs effectively, and align with the Universal Design for Learning Guidelines for students with special needs (UDL) (CAST, 2011). Designed to be used with all learners, the frameworks of *shared* and *close reading* can be molded to provide for special needs students through adherence to the precepts governing successful intervention.

**Real-World Classroom Application of SRE and Close Reading**

Mr. Michael Bennett, a fourth grade teacher in a small economically-poor rural district in his third year of teaching, sought the guidance of his former professor (this author) in working with struggling readers. Excited by the dual prospect of mentoring a novice teacher and working in the classroom we began a professional collaboration whose



Table 2: *Components for Close Reading Lesson*. Adapted from Fisher & Frey, 2012, p. 181-187.

### Checklist of Components for Close Reading Lesson

1. **Short passages** (2-3 paragraphs up to two pages) to teach skills that students will use independently for navigating longer texts. May consist of short or shortened text.
2. **Complex Text:** Taking into account the qualitative, quantitative and the reader and task considerations for the readability of a passage; may go beyond the independent reading level of the students, requiring teacher modeling of fluent oral reading.
3. **Limited Frontloading:** Provide definitions of unknown words on an as-needed basis.
4. **Rereading:** Students reread the text multiple times for the purpose of building on existing comprehension and meaning. Each successive reading beyond the initial read provides expanded background information.
5. **Text-Dependent Questions (TDQ)/Linking the Question to the Standard from the CCSS:** Responding to questions about the big ideas in the text requires students to cite evidence from the text for their thinking.
6. **Discussion:** Conversation emanates from sharing out responses to text-dependent questions.
7. **Annotation:** “Reading with a pencil.” Students use a combination of coding, underlining, circling, post-it and margin notes directly on the text. Teacher circulates to identify patterns of confusion or erroneous understandings, which provides teaching points for clarification.

initial purpose was to examine the most effective pedagogical practices for addressing the needs of the struggling learners in his class through adherence to the research-based practices aligned with the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 10).

Initially drawing from Connecticut’s Scientifically-Research-Based Intervention (SRBI, 2008), which delineated a three-tiered model for instruction in which the core curriculum is represented by 80% of the students, the overarching goal was to design an intervention for tiered students that mirrored and flowed from the “Core General Education Practices” (p. 13). An additional requirement was to construct a meaningful intervention plan that

would provide curricular access for students receiving special education services because “they are expected to be challenged to excel within the general education curriculum” (CAST, 2011, p.4).

The format of the lessons described within this article began with a daily 15-20 minute interactive read-aloud, conducted by Mr. Bennett. Following the teacher’s read-aloud in which the entire class participated, the university instructor modified lessons to afford tiered students the opportunity to attain similar core curriculum objectives without compromising expectations of standards. All lessons described in this article occurred within Mr. Bennett’s classroom during the course of one week during the 2012-2013 school year.

#### Day 1 – Projection of a Visual Image and an Interactive Read-Aloud

Beginning with the projection of a visual image onto the interactive white board, students were asked to respond by writing or sketching their insights and impressions of an illustration from the text that had been divided into quadrants that were exposed one section at a time (Daniels & Steineke, 2011). This *close reading* of a visual text allowed students to anticipate the story elements before engaging in a *close reading* of the text itself.

Drawing from the workshop model consisting of *read-aloud*, *shared*, *guided*, and *independent reading* implemented within the core curriculum, Mr. Bennett (see Figure 1) followed with an *interactive read-aloud* using a

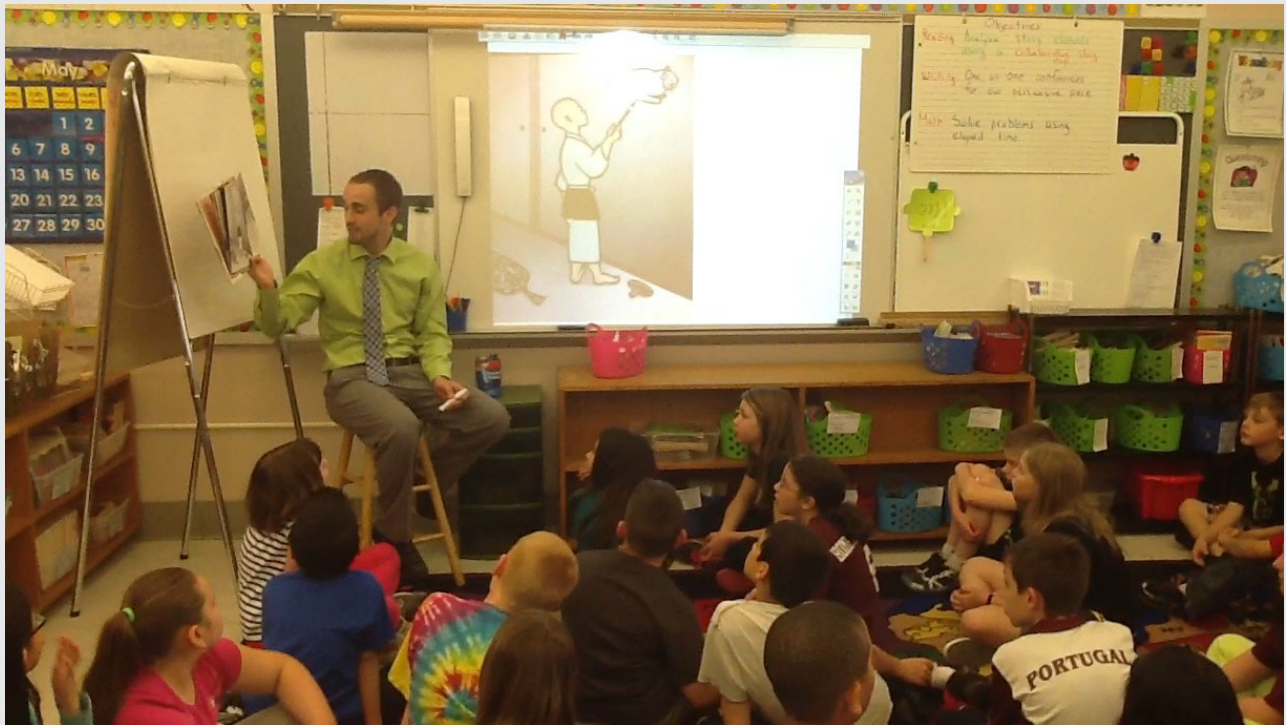


Figure 1. Whole Class Interactive Read-Aloud

version of a Japanese legend, *The Boy Who Drew Cats* (Hodges, 2002). With a lexile of 830L, the text included the requisite qualitative dimensions of text complexity for grade four in providing a rigorous analysis of the deeper levels of meaning and the inherent structures within the story, while keeping in mind the quantitative aspects concerning sentence length and word frequency. Illustrations from the text coincided with the oral reading and were projected on the interactive white board.

Mr. Bennett strategically paired students with talking buddies in advance, thus garnering participation from everyone in the class. At intermittent stopping points during the read-aloud, he anticipated difficult phrases by discussing his thoughts through think-alouds. For example, he read, “[Joji] liked to draw cats during study hours and draw cats even where cats ought not to have been

drawn at all (Hodges, 2002, p. 7). Mr. Bennett mused, “In this sentence alone the author uses the word cats three times. I am thinking that she repeated the word cats because she wants the reader to know how important this word is in the story. Authors tend to repeat words when they want the reader to realize an important idea.” He continued by asking students text-dependent questions that required them to cite evidence for their thinking. Following the read-aloud, students reread a complex excerpt of the text for a closer discussion of the story elements, including how the setting of the story contributed to their understanding of the characters and events, and how the interrelationships enhanced their understanding of resolution, and theme.

#### Day 2 – Summarizing through the Process of Story Map

Following a rereading of *The Boy Who Drew Cats* (Hodges, 2002), the

university instructor facilitated a class discussion of story elements, followed by a deconstruction of the text, focusing on the first three standards of the CCSS (see Figure 2). Then she introduced the concept of summarizing through story mapping by explaining to the students, “When we summarize, we tell what happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story, but we take only the most important information of the story – the events that drive the flow of the story.” Using the pasta analogy to help them extract the most relevant information from the text (Cummins, 2011), she said, “Think of when your mom makes pasta. She puts the pasta in the pot of water. Then she takes the pasta out of the water and drains it. Do you want to eat pasta or water? When we summarize, we separate the pasta from the water” (Cummins, 2011, p. 22). In this way students would have a strategy for extracting the main ideas from extraneous detail.



**Book Title:** *The Boy Who Drew Cats*

**Setting:** (Time, place, and a little bit about the character) Japan, a long time ago

**Main Characters:**

Joji, the boy who liked to draw cats

Father, Joji's father

Priest, sent Joji away when he could not stop drawing cats.

**Point of View:** Story told in the 3rd person.

**Problem:** Joji spent all his time drawing cats, and could not think about doing anything else.

**Solution:** The priest banished him from the temple because he was disobedient.

**Event 1:** Joji was a young Chinese boy who was too weak to help out on the farm, so his parents brought him to a temple so that he could become a priest.

**Event 2:** However, Joji drew cats when he was supposed to read and write with the other students.

**Event 3:** Soon Joji's habit of drawing cats made the priest angry, and the priest told him to pack his things and leave the temple, but warned him to "avoid large places at night and keep to small."

**Event 4:** But Joji was afraid to go home because he knew that his father would be angry, so he stopped at another temple in a nearby village.

**Event 5:** When he saw blank screens, he began to draw cats everywhere until he felt sleepy, and he went to sleep in a little cabinet.

**Event 6:** In the morning, he saw a dead monster rat in the middle of the room that had been killed when his drawings of the cats came to life.

**Solution:** Joji's habit of drawing cats ultimately saved the lives of people from a monster rat.

**Theme:** Follow your heart. Joji wanted to draw cats, and even though his parents and the priest tried to discourage him, he continued to draw cats. Eventually, he became a hero when his drawings came to life and killed the monster rat in the town.

*Figure 2. Story Map for The Boy Who Drew Cats (Hodges, 2002).*

A modified story map template based on Kissner's (2006, p. 98-99) model provided a framework for revisiting the text so that students could perceive the interrelationships among the characters and events, which prepared them for a *close reading* activity focusing on a later lesson on syntax and diction. Students then worked in partners to create simple story maps so they might have the opportunity to

consider the features of the narrative at-hand in attempting to construct their own summaries using their "just right texts." Through discussion and collaborative story mapping, students were able to refine their initial attempts to summarize.

**Day 2: Summarizing for Tiers 2 and 3**

In small group instruction, the simple strategy, somebody/wanted/but/so/and (adapted from Beers, 2003)

helped students understand the key features of literary text as they summarized the familiar tale of *The Three Little Pigs* (Galdone, 1970). After the teacher modeled think-aloud summary statements from the point of view of the first and second little pigs, students collaborated with the teacher in the construction of a summary statement for the third little pig. The scaffolding of the summary statements from the perspectives of

the first and second little pigs was sufficient for students to be able to work in partners to complete the table from the point of view of the wolf as shown in Figure 3.

Scaffolding the construction of summary statements through collaboration with the teacher prepared them to independently summarize *The Boy Who Drew Cats* using the somebody/wanted/but/so/and format for each of the characters. In preparation for this activity students participated in a *shared reading* of the text, beginning with a read aloud of an abridged version of *The Boy Who Drew Cats*, (Shephard, 1997). During the second read, students were invited to read along with the teacher. Rereading the text, a procedural feature included in both *shared* and *close reading*, promotes fluent and accurate reading and increases comprehension.

Following the third reading of the story, students worked to complete the somebody/wanted/but/so/and chart for each of the main characters in *The Boy Who Drew Cats* using the previous template (see Figure 4). Summarizing the story from the point of view of the main characters aligns with CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6 ([NGA & CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10). Figure 4 shows a completed point-of-view summary for each of the main characters in the abridged version.

**Day 3. Annotating the Text for Tiers 2 & 3**

While Mr. Bennett, taught Tier I students how to annotate text in a *close reading* using a complex portion of the original text, the university instructor formatted an abridged version of the story into two columns, conducive for showing students in

tiers two and three how to “read with a pencil” (Fisher et al., 2012, p. 111). She explained that annotating the text is like having an inner conversation with the writer (Paul & Elder, 2006), and she modeled her own thinking as she wrote in the margin.

An additional reading of the text during *shared reading* allowed for deeper discussion of the text into which aspects of *close reading* were integrated. Students concluded that the author’s use of repetition for the word “cats” revealed that he thought it was important to emphasize the main character’s obsession for drawing cats. Identifying examples of onomatopoeia that occurred within the story, including “rrrrrr,” yowl, roar, and thud, students acknowledged that the author’s word choices helped them deepen their understanding of the

Scaffold	Somebody	wanted	but	so	and
Teacher modeling	The lazy first little pig	to spend his time having fun so he quickly built his house out of straw	the house wasn't strong enough	the big bad wolf huffed and puffed and blew the house down	the first little pig went to live with the second little pig.
Teacher modeling	The lazy second little pig	to spend his time having fun so he quickly built his house out of sticks	the house still wasn't strong to keep the big bad wolf away	the wolf huffed and puffed and blew the house down	both the first and second little pigs went to live with the third little pig.
Collaboration between teacher and students	The hard-working third little pig	to live a safe and peaceful life so he built his house out of bricks	his brothers came a-knocking because they were afraid of the big bad wolf	he let them in	they waited for the big bad wolf.
Students complete in partnerships	The wolf	to eat the three little pigs	the pigs put a pot of boiling water on the * <i>hearth</i> of the fire place	the wolf went roaring from the house	he never bothered them again.

Figure 3. Somebody/Wanted/But/So/And to Summarize Point of View (adapted from Beers, 2003)





650L, the text provided a balance of appropriate challenges and supports, yet sufficiently complex to warrant meaty discussion. Students acknowledged ostensible differences in the events and theme without prompting. Having them annotate the text prepared them for essay writing.

**Day 5. Deeper Discussion with Entire Class**

An illustration from the text projected on the interactive white board was used to begin a discussion of tone and mood. Using their schema and their

knowledge of the story, the university instructor asked students to study the image by paying attention to the emotions, feelings, facial expressions, the setting, the objects within the visual image, and the motivation of the characters. She told them that lighting in a picture is oftentimes associated with the mood, and that the tone is the author's attitude toward the subject. Students were asked to jot down their questions, insights, predictions, and impressions and to write a title for the illustration before they shared their insights with

their turn-and-talk partner. The visual image not only motivated students to discuss the relationship between the main characters of the story, but enabled them to garner meaning from the characters' facial expressions in relating the event to the illustration and to the story in its entirety.

The university instructor introduced a house graphic (Drasch, Weingart & Elias-Staron (2012) (see Figure 7) as a framework for guiding a *close reading* of excerpted text from *The Boy Who Drew Cats* (Levine, 1993). Focusing on Standard 4 of the CCSS, students were encouraged to think about the special words and phrases in the story that the author used to clarify how "specific word choices shape meaning or tone" (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 10). The categories of words included, emotions, strong words, sounds, figures of speech and literary devices as reflected in the "basement" portion of the graphic. Projecting selected portions of the text allowed everyone access to the same text. By emphasizing the words and phrases of the author, students began to develop an appreciation of tone and mood as the following discussion shows:

**Lori:** The mother swallowed her sorrow when she took Kenji to the monastery. I guess she was afraid because her son was sick. You really can't swallow sorrow, so it must be a literary technique that means doing something even though you are sad.

**Teacher:** That's called an idiom. It is an expression used to convey a particular meaning, which is separate from the words. Another example of an idiom is "pulling your leg."

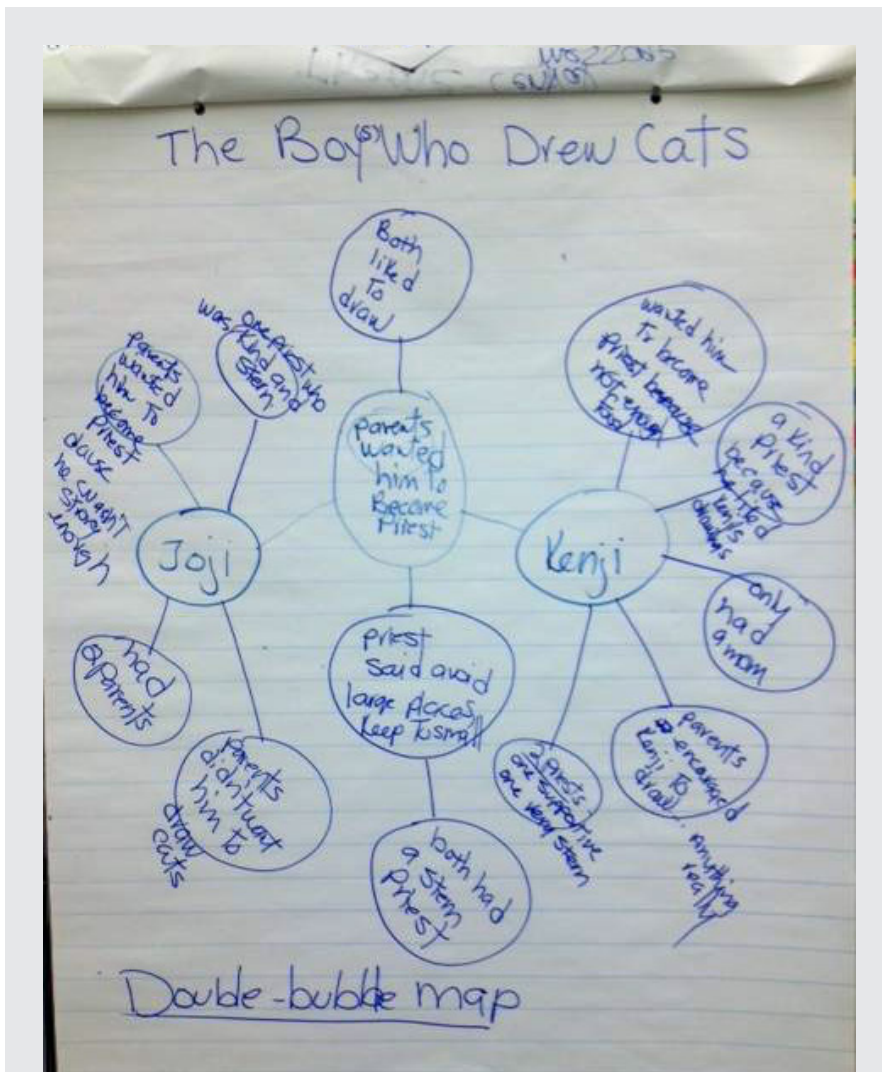


Figure 6. A Double-Bubble Map (Hyerle & Yeager, 2007) allows for student flexibility in generating comparisons in the analysis of two or more texts.

**Lakeisha:** I know that one: it means that someone is teasing you.

**Kent:** It says that “sleep pressed against his eyes.” It’s like a fancy way to say that he was tired.

**Rachael:** And that’s not the only fancy word that the author uses. The old priest was “stern as stone.” I guess that means that the priest was pretty mean.

**Brandon:** That’s a simile because of the “as” [in the phrase stern as stone]

**Katie:** There’s another simile with “like” when it says that the old priest appeared “like a thundercloud.”

**Tyler:** You see the word cats a lot. He painted cats. Powerful cats. Sleek cats, Alert cats. Do ya think the author wants us to know that Kenji liked drawing cats because he kept repeating the word “cats?”

As students discussed the nuances of the vocabulary and phrases, the university instructor scribed their responses onto chart paper, which was completed over two sessions whose duration was fifteen minutes. They worked their way from the “basement” of the graphic to the “roof” as they progressed from the categories of “details” to the setting of the story where students discussed the places in which events of the story occurred. They easily identified the characters and the point of view and the goal of each of the characters. They referred back to the categories of word choice when discussing the tone and mood of the story. By the

time they approached the roof of the graphic, students easily identified several themes within the narrative.

**Conclusion**

“Struggling readers do more oral reading during their lessons than do better readers” (Allington, 2013, p. 526), resulting in fewer opportunities for them to apply foundational learning in authentic reading contexts. However, embedding skill instruction into authentic reading and writing activities encouraged less proficient students to construct meaning across

texts, and allowed them to grow and begin to develop the skills that they will use throughout their lifetimes. Using the same text for five days in a *shared reading* approach not only enabled special needs students, English Language Learners, and other struggling readers to increase fluency and accuracy in oral reading, but also empowered them to deepen their comprehension and their understanding of the implicit messages within the narrative through reading excerpts closely. Introducing a second version of the story mid-week nudged

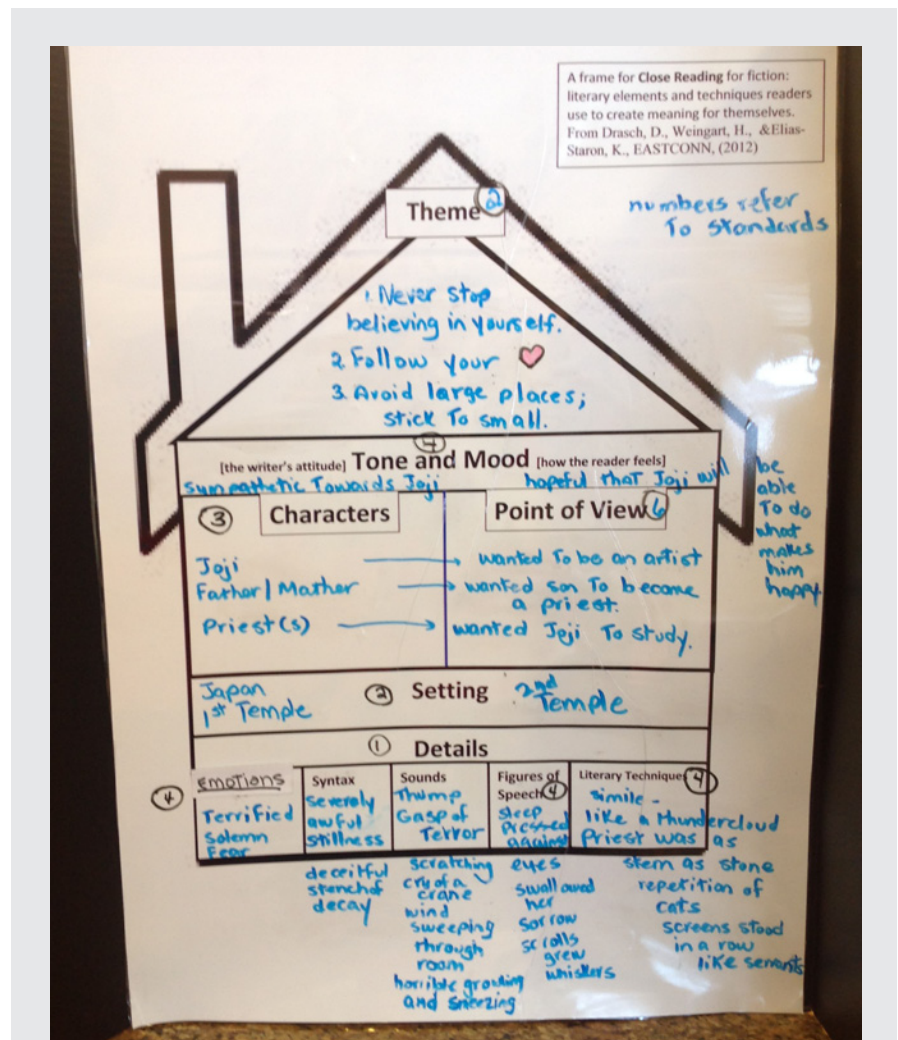


Figure 7. The completed house graphic, adapted from Drash, H., Elias-Staron, K., & Weingart, H. (2012), House graphic, EASTCONN. Used with permission



students into a critical comparison through close reading, as they reconsidered authors' purposes and developed a greater appreciation of the themes.

"The purpose of an intervention system is not to place a student in a program, service, or setting, but to identify the student's needs and implement a plan to meet them" (ICLE, 2011, p. 9). Guided by the principles of principles of UDL (CAST, 2011), the university instructor and the classroom teacher customized the *shared* and *close reading* strategies for struggling learners to support students' unique differences and backgrounds, resulting in increased success for students who had been previously disenfranchised by the traditional core curriculum. In a class of 27 students in which eight had been identified to receive tier 2 and three to receive tier 3 instruction, all except one student demonstrated significant gains in oral reading fluency and comprehension as reflected on district progress monitoring instruments during the period from October to June.

### What's Next?

Initial attempts to accommodate struggling readers through a merging of the pedagogies of *shared* and *close reading* is just the first of many steps that will be necessary for incremental change. Implications may not be fully realized until after the next generation of assessments have been fully implemented, and ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the classroom routine. Indeed, the ramifications of customizing pedagogy for the neediest students have yet to be determined, awaiting implementation by competing consortia, which are designed to measure academic growth, rather than the academic deficits of diverse special needs populations (SBAC, 2012).

For years, teachers' attempts to differentiate instruction have been nullified by unforgiving and inconsiderate assessments, which have yielded unfair and inaccurate measures of actual ability (ICLE, 2011). Currently at the piedmont of a revitalized assessment system, district administrators, teachers, teacher educators, reading specialists, and support personnel can only begin to speculate about the vast implications of computer-adapted technology on existing pedagogy and intervention, and the extent to which student performance data be used to inform, and transform instruction and intervention (2011). To that end, reading professionals, special educators, test developers, researchers, and statisticians will continue to ponder the validity of the new and improved assessments, and the role of research in the cyclical process of curriculum and instruction.

Bridging the divide between RTI and the CCSS will continue to necessitate a rethinking and a continual revisiting of research-based practices and pedagogies to continue to address students' developmental needs, inclusive of assessments that are sensitive to the differences in diverse populations. Future research agendas will need to include reliable and valid measures for ongoing modification of time-honored research-based practices

in a confluence of ideals and purpose that consider strategic ways to propel student performance.

Closing the gap between less proficient readers and their more capable peers will require more than deliberate scaffolding of meaningful instruction. Curricular alignment of instruction and assessments in a contiguous framework embedded with the principles of UDL, a coherent core curriculum, and the CCSS would establish the foundation for all students, regardless of tier or diagnostic identifier, to succeed.



### References

- Allington, R. (2013). What really matters when working with struggling readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 66 (7) 520 -530.
- Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read: What teachers can do: A guide for teachers 6-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cast (2011). Universal design for learning guidelines version 2.0. Wakefield, MA: Author. Retrieved on February 24, 2014 from [www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org), [www.udlcenter.org](http://www.udlcenter.org)
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6 retrieved on March 25, 2014 from [www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/1/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/1/)
- Connecticut State Board of Education

**DR. KAREN C. WATERS** is Director of the Literacy Specialist Programs at the Farrington College of Education at Sacred Heart University (SHU). She came to SHU in 2006, having held a number of positions during her 31-year career in Bridgeport – including director of literacy, elementary school principal, Title I special projects coordinator, grant writer, reading specialist, and classroom teacher. She has presented workshops at local, state, and national conferences on topics including response to intervention, family literacy, the Common Core State Standards, integrating music and literacy, and higher level thinking in urban adolescents. She is a contributing author of *Building struggling students' higher level literacy: Practical ideas, powerful solutions* (2010) edited by T. Gunning and J. Collins.

- (2008). *Using scientific research-based interventions: Improving Education for all students. Connecticut's framework for RTI*. Retrieved on December 13, 2013 at [www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/srbi\\_full\\_document.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/srbi_full_document.pdf).
- Cummins, S. (2011). Close reading for informational text: Assessment driven instruction, in grades 3-8. NY: New York. Guilford press.
- Daniels, H. & Steineke, N. (2011). *Texts and lessons for content area reading*. Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann.
- Drash, H., Elias-Staron, K., & Weingart, H. (2012). House graphic, EASTCONN.
- Fisher, D., & Frey (2012). Close reading in the elementary schools. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(3) 179-188.
- Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Lapp, D. (2008). Shared readings: Modeling comprehension, vocabulary, text structures, and text features for older readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(7) , p. 548-556. DOI:10.1598/RT.61.7.4
- Fisher, D., & Frey (2012). Close reading in the elementary schools. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(3), p. 179-188.
- Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Lapp, D. (2012). Text complexity: Raising rigor in reading. Newark: DE. IRA.
- Gunning, T. (2006). *Assessing and correcting reading and writing difficulties, 3rd Ed*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Holdaway, D. (1979). *The foundation of literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hyerle, D. & Yeager, C. (2007). Thinking maps: A language for learning. Cary: NC. Thinking Maps, Inc.
- Kissner, E. (2006). Summarizing, paraphrasing, and retelling: Skills for better reading, writing, and test taking. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE, 2011). *Rigor, relevance, and relationships for all students. Fewer, Clearer, Higher Common Core State Standards: Implications for Students Receiving Special Education Services*. Rexford, NY. Retrieved February 18, 2014 from [www.leadered.com/.../Special%20Ed%20&%20CCSS%20white%20paper](http://www.leadered.com/.../Special%20Ed%20&%20CCSS%20white%20paper)
- International Reading Association. (IRA, 2010). Response to Intervention: *Guiding principles for educators from the International Reading Association*. Retrieved on May 17, 2013 from [www.reading.org/Libraries/Resources/RTI\\_brochure\\_web.pdf](http://www.reading.org/Libraries/Resources/RTI_brochure_web.pdf)
- Lipson, M.Y, Chomsky-Higgins, P., & Kanfer, J. (2011). Diagnosis: The missing ingredient in RTI assessment. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(3) 204-208.
- McGill-Franzen, A. & Smith, K. (2013). RTI and the common core. In S.B. Neuman and L.B. Gambrell (Eds.), *Quality reading instruction in the age of common core standards* (pp107-120), Newark, DE: IRA.
- McLaughlin, M. & Overturf, B. (2012). The Common Core: Insights into the k-5 standards. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(2), 153-164.
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: About the standards*. Washington, DC: authors. Retrieved from [www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards](http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards)
- Nichols, M. (2006). *Comprehension through conversation*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Paul, R. & Elder, L. (2006). How to read a paragraph: The art of close reading. Dilton Beach: CA: Foundation of Critical Thinking.
- Scanlon, D. (2013). Assessing RTI strategies: The trouble with packaged and scripted interventions. *Reading Today*, 31(1),12-16.
- Scientifically-Based Research Intervention (SRBI) (2008). Improving education for all students. Connecticut's framework for RTI, retrieved on November 2, 2012 from [www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/srbi\\_full\\_document.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/srbi_full_document.pdf)
- Smarter-Balanced Accessibility (2012). Retrieved on February 18, 2014 at [www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/SmarterBalanced\\_Accessibility\\_Factsheet.pdf](http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/SmarterBalanced_Accessibility_Factsheet.pdf)
- Stahl, K.A.D. (2011). Applying new visions of reading development in today's classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*, 65, 52-56. doi: 10.1598/RT.65.
- Stahl, K. (2012). Complex text or frustration-level text: Using shared reading to bridge the difference. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(1), 47-51.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Weishar, P. & Weishar, M. (2012). *Implementing Response to Intervention in Reading within the elementary classroom*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.:Pearson.
- Wixson, K.K. & Valencia, S.W. (2011). Assessment in RTI: What teachers and specialists need to know. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(6), 466-469.

## Literature Cited

- DePaola, T. (1989). *The art lesson*. NY: Trumpet Publishing.
- Galdone, P. (1970). *The three little pigs*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Hodges, M. (2002). *Boy who drew cats*. NY:Holiday House.
- Levine, A. A. (1993). *Boy who drew cats*. NY: Dial.
- Shephard, A. (1997). *Boy who drew cats*. Retrieved on April 10, 2013 from [www.aaronshp.com/stories/045.html](http://www.aaronshp.com/stories/045.html). Used with permission.

## Websites

- Lexile.com Lexile level for *Boy Who Drew Cats* retrieved on February 22, 2014 at [www.lexile.com/analyzer/results/2433509/](http://www.lexile.com/analyzer/results/2433509/)