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Book Review: Close Reading in Elementary School: Bringing Readers and Texts Together

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Editor's Corner:

A Recent IRA Position Statement

I applaud the 2014 IRA Position Statement, "Using High-Stakes Assessments for Grade Retention and Graduation Decisions," which recently was sent to the IRA membership. Jill D. Lewis-Spector chaired the Task Force, and Laurie A. Elish-Piper, Rona F. Flippo, Maryann Manning, and Suzanne N. Nakashima served as members. At the time of adoption, Maureen McLaughlin, Jill D. Lewis-Spector, Heather I. Bell, Steven L. Layne, William H. Teale, Douglas Fisher, Rona F. Flippo, Shelley Stagg Peterson, Bernadette Dwyer, Laurie A. Elish-Piper, and Julianne Scullen comprised the IRA Board of Directors.

IRA issued a "High-Stakes Assessments in Reading" Position Statement in 1999. Authors of the Statement wrote, "The Board of Directors of the International Reading Association is opposed to high-stakes testing. High-stakes testing means that one test is used to make important decisions about students, teachers, and schools. In a high-stakes testing situation, if students score high on a single test they could be placed in honors classes or a gifted program. On the other hand, if students score low on a high-stakes test, it could mean that they will be rejected by a particular college, and it could affect their teacher's salary and the rating of the school district as compared with others where the same test was given." Members of the Board of Directors at the time of the Statement adoption were Kathryn A. Ransom, Carol Minnick Santa, Carmelita K. Williams, Kathryn H. Au, Betsy M. Baker, Patricia A. Edwards, James V. Hoffman, Adria F. Klein, Diane L. Larson, John W. Logan, Lesley Mandel Morrow, and Timothy Shanahan.

Other literacy scholars have spoken and written against using a single test score to make high-impact decisions about students, their teachers, and their schools. These included IRA members Richard L. Allington, Scott G. Paris, and Dale D. Johnson who voiced their concerns long before high-stakes testing became commonplace. I have noted all the above names because these members were not fearful of speaking out against an injustice.

Absent from these names are some who have been given yearly visibility by IRA, but for reasons known only to them, have shied away from stating, at any respectable length verbally or in writing, that high-stakes tests punish children for being economically poor.

Journal Updates

Please note that The Reading Professor now conducts all of its business electronically. Manuscripts can be sent to Co-editor Bonnie Johnson (bonnie.johnson@snc.edu). Editorial Board Members and I strongly recommend that manuscripts be carefully reviewed for clarity and correct use of APA style before sending them to the Co-editor. Please refrain from using strong-arm tactics (via e-mail or other modes) to get an article published, and please be patient when waiting for the three reviewers' decisions. Reviewers' decisions are final.

The job of an Editorial Board Member is time-consuming and thankless. Some authors have complained that "typos" appeared in their published articles. Proofreading is a challenging task because the mind tends to correct mistakes. The Editorial Board Members do a laudatory job in catching errors. They deserve medals for their knowledge of the literature and perseverance in seeing an article through to the publication stage. The only way to be certain that "typos" do not appear in the Journal is for authors to submit manuscripts without them.

Best wishes for 2015.

Bonnie Johnson, Ph.D.