

## Specialized Literacy Professionals

A Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association

[Home](#)

[Publications](#)

[Conferences](#)

[Research](#)

[Editorials](#)

[Membership](#)

[About](#)

Volume XVII, No. 2

Winter, 2007

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Dr. Shanklin Speaks

About our SIG, Specialized Reading Professionals

Our Members Publish

Latino Children's Literature es muy Caliente

Our SIG in Toronto

Membership Form – Specialized Reading Professionals

Dr. Valadez's Recommendations

Check the Red Check

Specialized Reading Professionals Officers

**CHAIR:** Barbara Klebanow  
300 Hayward Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY 10552  
914-669-5930

**SECRETARY:** Jack Cassidy  
Texas A&M University Corpus Christi, ECDC  
6300 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412  
261-825-9611  
Jack.Cassidy@tamucc.edu

**TREASURER:** Gary L. Shaffer  
1809 Country Club Drive,  
Tullahoma, IN 37388-4832  
931-455-4312

**NEWSLETTER EDITORS:** Mary Ellen Skidmore  
11 Sunset Drive, Whispering Pines, NC 28327  
& Jack Cassidy  
(see above)

# The Literacy Professional

A publication of IRA's Specialized Reading Professionals Special Interest Group

## Dr. Shanklin Speaks

By Natalie Heisey and Kellee Jenkins,  
University of Pittsburgh & Dyann  
Panepinto, Allegheny Intermediate Unit



Dr. Nancy L. Shanklin is a longtime member of the IRA special interest group, Specialized Reading Professionals, and is currently the Director of the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (LCC). She is also an Associate Professor in Literacy, Language, and Culturally Responsive Teaching in the School of Education and Human Development at University of Colorado at Denver. This interview was conducted as one of the possible assignments for a course on Literacy Coaching taught by Rita Bean, University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Bean is also a longtime member of this SIG and a member of the advisory board to the LCC.

### 1. How did you gain an interest in literacy coaching?

I have been interested in literacy coaching since the early 1980's. I was a site professor for a professional development model high school in Denver. I helped with teacher candidates and also served as a literacy coach in that school for approximately 5 years.

I believe that professional development for teachers is changing and we have to reflect upon teaching and how it has changed as well as how education itself is changing. We have to deliver professional development in different ways so that it works for different school settings. I believe that ways of team teaching and working together are important in making teaching better.

### 2. What is the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse and how does it meet the needs of coaches and others?

LCC is a joint enterprise of IRA and NCTE developed for three reasons: to increase the knowledge base, research, and practice of literacy coaching. LCC provides support for the literacy coach; it helps them to do their job well and to have access to new practices. That is why I have links to the NCTE, IRA and other content area groups on the LCC website. Teachers, administrators, researchers, and policy makers will also have an interest in the LCC. Literacy coaching will only be successful when we can get all these groups thinking about a vision for improving students' literacy learning.

Continued on next page.

Dr. Shanklin, Continued

**3. How can the LCC help define and refine what it means to be a literacy coach?**

In my mind that's why this is the "coaching" clearinghouse and not the "coaches" clearinghouse. In my view I wanted to use the verb form and to begin to talk about coaching as an act. I'm not even sure that we know all the forms that coaching can take right now. I think that we need to begin to say that there are many different purposes and means of coaching. People need to be clear about these purposes.

In the site itself, we are about to put up ten considerations under the programs button. These are questions that principals and districts ought to ask themselves when they are thinking about starting a literacy coaching program, or when they revise such programs. I think that our 'considerations' will help move schools forward. Districts and schools will be able to enter their programs into the site and to read about others. There will also soon be a LCC brief about this topic.

**4. Who can benefit most from the LCC? Who else are you reaching out to?**

The LCC is for the literacy coach, first and foremost, but it is also for teachers so they can better understand coaching. Also, as coaching becomes more widespread, parents may become more interested. Furthermore, literacy coaching will only be successful if we can get administrators, policy makers, and researchers thinking about, creating a vision for, and working toward student literacy learning.

**5. What are you most excited about?**

I am excited about trying to provide a vehicle through the LCC for helping school professionals to support each other—by reflecting upon teaching. I really want this website to be what literacy coaches and the whole literacy community want it to be. I want the LCC to be something that the field is happy with and that serves their needs. We can use this site to influence our thinking about literacy and discuss democratically different perspectives of what we really need to do to help students the most. That is what excites me the most!

**6. Tell us something about Nancy Shanklin.**

"I love to ski [Of course! She lives in Colorado]. The best place to ski is everywhere in Colorado. There are beautiful views from everywhere."

**7. If you had one hour to do anything you would like, what would it be?**

I would be at home and put on beautiful music. I would read something new or reread something that someone special has given to me.

We hope you visit the Clearinghouse and see all that it has to offer at <http://www.literacycoachingonline.org>

## About our SIG, Specialized Reading Professionals

Specialized Reading Professionals is a special interest group of IRA open to all members but devoted to the needs and concerns of those in IRA with specialized training or responsibilities in reading or literacy. As defined in the IRA publication Standards for Reading Professionals, these are individuals who are reading specialists, literacy coaches, reading coordinators, or teacher educators. This special interest group has been in existence since 1989 and includes in its membership many IRA Board members, both past and present. It is one of the largest of IRA's special interest groups.

Specialized Reading Professionals publishes a newsletter, sponsors workshops at the annual convention, and, most importantly, serves as a group urging the IRA Board to take stands on important issues. Some of the issues have included: the plight of reading specialists; campaigning for the IRA Board; accreditation of teacher preparation programs and involving more P-12 educators in leadership roles. These stands on important issues have elicited many positive comments:

"This group is a beacon of light in the IRA organization. Keep up the good work."

Dr. Arthur Smith  
State University of New York at Brockport

## Our Members Publish

Last month we started this column which highlights the recent books and articles that our members have published in 2006 and early 2007. SIG member names are listed in boldface type. Please e-mail Jack Cassidy (Jack.Cassidy@tamucc.edu) with any publications that we have missed.

**Richard L. Allington** (University of Tennessee) authored or co-authored many pieces in 2006 and early 2007 including: "Reading Lessons and Federal Policymaking" in the *Elementary School Journal*, (Vol. 107, No.1); "Contamination of Current Accountability Systems in Phi Delta Kappan", (Vol.87, No.10); "Hijacking Fluency and Instructionally Informative Assessment" in *Fluency Instruction: Research-based Best Practice* published by Guilford and co-edited by Camille Blachowicz; "How Effective Teachers Address the Needs of Struggling Readers" in *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction: "Fluency: Still Waiting after All These Years"* in *What Research Has to say about Fluency Instruction* published by IRA and co-edited by **Alan Farstrup** (International Reading Association.) Alan also co-authored several chapters in the book.

**Camille Blachowicz**, (National Louis University, IL) co-authored, "Best Practices in Teaching Vocabulary" which appeared in the book, *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*, 3rd Edition I co-edited by **Linda Gambrell**, (Clemson University, SC) and published by Guilford. Camille Blachowicz also co-authored the book, *Integrated Vocabulary Instruction: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners in Grades 1-5* published by Learning Point Associates. In addition, Camille co-authored "Vocabulary: Questions from the Classroom" in the *Reading Research Quarterly*, (Vol. 41, No.4).

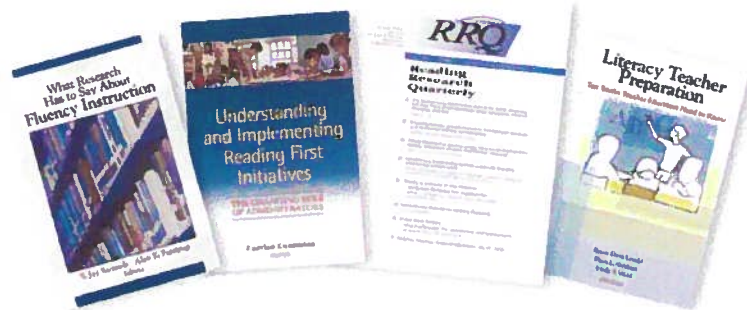
**Carrice Cummins** (Louisiana Tech University) edited *Understanding and Implementing Reading First Initiatives*, published by IRA. She also authored or co-authored several chapters in the book.

**Jack Cassidy** (Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi) and **Drew Cassidy** published their yearly survey of literacy trends and issues, "What's Hot, What's Not for 2007: Adolescent Literacy Ranks as Hottest Topic in 11th Annual Survey" in the February/March issue of *Reading Today*.

**Susan Davis Lenski** (Portland State University) co-edited *Literacy Teacher Preparation: Ten Truths Teacher Educators Need to Know* published by IRA. She also co-authored several chapters in the book

**Timothy Shanahan** (University of Illinois at Chicago) is the author, of a number of publications that appeared in 2006 including: "The Shift from Polarization in Reading: Relying on Research Rather Than Compromise" in *Reading Research at Work* published by Guilford Press; "Relations Among Oral Language, Reading, and Writing Development" in the *Handbook of Writing Research* published by Guilford Press; "Developing Fluency in the Context of Effective Literacy Instruction" in *Fluency Instruction: Research-based Practices* published by Guilford Press and co-edited by Camille Blachowicz. Perhaps, Tim's most noteworthy publication is the co-edited volume *Developing Literacy in Second-language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth* published by Erlbaum and in which, he also co-authored several chapters. This work is destined to be the definitive work on literacy for second language learners. Tim chaired the government Panel that reviewed this research. Rumors circulated that the Bush administration was dissatisfied with the conclusions of the Panel and therefore declined to publish the finding. – thus, Erlbaum became the publisher. Tim is also the primary author of the AMP Reading System, a middle school intervention program, published by Pearson Education.

**Shelley Wepner** (Manhattanville College) authored or co-authored several articles "Broadening Our View about Technology Integration: Three Literacy Educators' Perspectives" in *Reading Horizons* (Vol.46, No.3) and "Testing Gone Amok: Leave No Teacher Candidate Behind" in *Teacher Education Quarterly*, (Vol.33, No.1).



Winter 2007 16

## Latino Children's Literature es muy Caliente

By Corinne Valadez, Ph.D.  
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Multicultural children's literature is not hot (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2006). However, with demographics indicating that the Latino population is the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States, perhaps Latino children's literature should be caliente. A growing Latino population translates to students with cultural and linguistic needs that are changing the dynamics of our nation's classrooms. Many teachers find themselves teaching students who are culturally, linguistically, and ethnically different from themselves. Teachers influence their students' everyday lives and can have a positive impact on the way Latinos view themselves and the world around them. One way that teachers can do that is to provide Latino students with culturally familiar literature that relates to their lives and positively reflects their own self-image.

There are a number of children's books that have been translated into Spanish. However, it is important to note that books that have been translated into Spanish are not always representative of authentic Latino children's literature. Authentic Latino children's literature are stories that are written by and about people of Latino descent. Latino children's literature should reflect authentic language, values and traditions of the culture. Stories often deal with issues of family education, language, assimilation, immigration, migration, religion, and spirituality. Latino students are not the only ones that benefit from reading culturally familiar literature. The use of Latino children's literature in school reading programs can enhance the regular reading program by providing students with an awareness of the Latino culture while making a contribution to overall competence in all areas of language arts and in reading comprehension.

There are four identified values associated with the inclusion of Latino children's literature for all students (Au, 1993). First, students begin to develop a sense of identity and pride in their own cultural group as they read about the experiences of other cultural groups. Students are exposed to a narrow linguistic, historical, and cultural picture when schools use literature that reflects only mainstream majority values. Second, reading Latino children's literature may help students develop an appreciation for the diversity and complexity of the Latino population and ultimately U. S. society. An introduction to differing cultural viewpoints in literature can serve as a starting point for young readers to become more enlightened, providing an awareness of other cultures and a consciousness of oneself and one's relationship to a new culture. Third, through the reading of Latino children's literature, students are presented with another perspective of historical forces that shaped U. S. society. By integrating Latino children's literature into a school reading program, children realize that Latinos have roots in the past and a strong heritage that is part of their culture. Fourth, reading



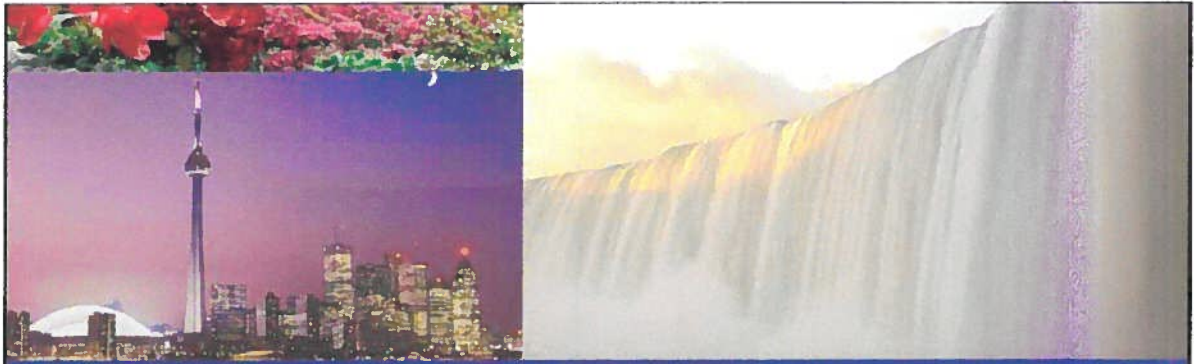
Latino children's literature allows students to explore issues of social justice. It is important that stories are carefully chosen and reflect accurate information, since more harm than good is done through literature which idealizes or glorifies a mythical past, or through tales which perpetuate negative stereotypes.

On a personal note, I was born and reared in San Antonio, Texas, a city that takes tremendous pride in its Latino heritage. However, as a young Latina attending school during the 70s, the only time that I read about Latinos was when we studied the Alamo. Needless to say the representations of Latinos in the required readings were not flattering. The stories I read reflected cultural heritages, traditions, and contributions made by European Americans. I can recall books featuring female protagonists but I cannot recall books that reflected my own cultural heritage, traditions, and significant contributions made by Latinos. Children's literature can be a powerful tool for helping students to understand themselves, their communities, their homes, and their world. In order for literature to facilitate students' understanding of themselves, they need to read books about people who look like them, speak like them, and share their values and traditions (Au, 2006; & Bishop, 1997) which is why Latino children's literature should be muy caliente.

### References

- Au, K. (1993). Literacy instruction in multicultural settings. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Au, K. (2006). Multicultural Issues and literacy achievement. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bishop, R.S. (1997). Selecting literature for a multicultural curriculum. In V.J. Harris (Ed.), Using multiethnic literature in the K-8 classroom. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.
- Cassidy, J. & Cassidy, D. (December 2005/January 2006). What's hot, what's not for 2006. Reading Today, 23(3), 1.

Dr. Valadez Recommendations, page 6



### Our SIG in Toronto

The Specialized Reading professionals SIG has a number of events planned at the annual IRA conference in Toronto. The first event is a planning meeting Tuesday, May 15, 2007 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am in the Huron & Kent rooms at the Sheraton Center. This meeting is open to all SIG members, and we will discuss crucial issues for the next year. Some of the issues could be: the composition of the IRA Board;

literacy coaching; and new initiatives in teacher education. The second meeting is on Thursday, May 17 from 11:00 a.m. until 1:45 p.m. in the Confederation Room of the Fairmount Royal York Hotel; This professional presentation, which was planned by longtime SIG member Rita Bean focuses on one of the "hottest" issues today – literacy coaching. The program entry is listed below:

**Literacy Coaching: Improving Literacy Instruction Through the Grades and Across the Curriculum**  
 Program Chair: Rita M. Bean, University of Pittsburgh

**Keynote Address:**

**A Model for Successful Literacy Coaching:**  
 • Jan Hasbrouck, JH Consulting

**Working Together to Improve Literacy Instruction in Content Areas**

- Sue Tosti, Cinnaminson School District, NJ
- Ed Palmer, Cinnaminson School District, NJ

**A Statewide Initiative: Literacy Coaching in Alabama**

- Georgina Pipes, Alabama State Department of Education
- Reeda Betts, Alabama State Department of Education

**On-Going Support for Reading Coaches in Reading First Schools in Pennsylvania**

- Beth Puschak PA Department of Education, Harrisburg, PA.
- Ruthie Rea, Pittsburgh School District
- Wendy Steensland, Berks County Intermediate Unit & PA Department of Education

**Teachers and Coaches Working Together to Build a Model for Instruction**

- Angela Joseph, New Castle School District, PA.
- Debra DeBlasio, New Castle School District, PA.
- Rudelle Batista, New Castle School District, PA.

## Membership Form – Specialized Reading Professionals

Checks should be made out to **Specialized Reading Professionals** and sent to:

**Gary L. Shaffer**  
**1809 Country Club Drive**  
**Tullahoma, TN 37388-4832**

- \$10.00 (one year)
- \$15.00 (two years)

Please share copies of this form with others who might be interested.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ IRA Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Dr. Valadez's Recommendations

We asked Dr. Valadez if she would recommend four books which celebrate Latino culture. Dr. Valadez said she would have trouble restricting herself to just four, but she did. Here they are!

Ada, A. F. (1997). *Gathering the sun: An alphabet in Spanish and English*. New York: Rayo. The poems and illustrations in this book are a celebration of the migrant farm worker. The book is written in both English and Spanish. ISBN: 0688170676

Anaya, R. (2000). *Elegy on the death of César Chavez*. Anaya uses poetry to eulogize the Mexican American labor activist Cesar Chavez and his work, organizing migrant farm workers. ISBN: 093817542

Mora, P. (1997). *A birthday basket for Tia*. : New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. Cecilia has a special relationship with her great-aunt, Tia. Cecilia wonders what would be the perfect birthday gift for Tia's ninetieth birthday. With the help of her cat, Chlca, Cecilia finds just the right present. ISBN: 0689813287

Muñoz-Ryan, P. (2002). *Esperanza rising*. New York: Scholastic. This is the story of how a young girl, Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico. When they arrive in Southern California, they have no choice but to work in the labor camps as migrant farm workers. ISBN: 043912042X

### ✓ Check the Red Check

Do you have a red check on the mailing label on the front of this newsletter and on the newsletter itself? If you do, it means your membership in our special interest group (SIG) will expire at the end of this year or you have not yet joined. If you have two red checks, it means your membership has already expired. In any case, it is time to RENEW your membership. Our SIG includes many prominent IRA leaders such as former IRA Presidents Mary Austin, Dorothy Strickland, Jack Cassidy, Ira Aaron, Doris Roettger-Svoboda and Dick Allington. Many present members of IRA's Executive Committee and Board are also included such as Tim Shanahan, Linda Gambrell, Jill Lewis, David Hernandez III, Susan Davis Lenski and Maryann Manning. Because this special interest group takes stands on important issues affecting all specialized reading professionals, we need your support.

**Seven strategies for reading success**

One reading intervention program teaches students all the skills they need

Only the AMP Reading System introduces seven critical reading strategies in the order shown to be most effective for student learning. Learn more at [www.AMPforSuccess.com](http://www.AMPforSuccess.com), or call 800-992-0244.

AMP Reading System author Dr. Timothy Shanahan was a member of the National Reading Panel, and is the 2006-07 President of the International Reading Association.

800-992-0244  
[www.agsglobe.com](http://www.agsglobe.com)

PEARSON  
AGS Globe

Copyright © 2007 Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Pearson AGS Globe. All rights reserved.