Winter 2018

Specialized Literacy Professionals

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President's Message

Dear Members,

I want to start our newsletter by recognizing the wonderful leadership of Drs. Evan Ortlieb, Wolfram Verlaan, and Diane Kern. All three have served our SIG and will continue to serve in NEW roles.

Dr. Ortlieb served as our 2016-2018 President. Under his leadership our SIG initiated multiple research studies. The findings of those studies will be released in the near future. Evan will now serve as the chair of the Research and Awards committees respectively. He is also currently serving as a member of our board (2018-2020).

Dr. Wolfram Verlaan served as our treasurer and webmaster for five years. He led us through our website redesign and many other projects. Wolfram will continue to be active in our SIG and serve on our research committee.

Dr. Diane Kern served on our Board from 2016-2018. Her specialized knowledge of the roles performed by literacy professionals has guided our SIG as she co-led the development of the Revised Standards for Literacy Professionals effort by the International Literacy Association. Dr. Kern will continue to be a very active part of our research committee.

In this newsletter, you will find updates from our various committees and information about special projects. I encourage you to share this newsletter with colleagues and other individuals that might be interested in the preparation and professional development of literacy professionals.

Dr. Stephanie Grote-Garcia
President of the Specialized Literacy Professionals SIG

Meeting...

Your Board Members

President-Elect. Bethanie Pletcher, *Assistant Professor*, Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi

Board Members.

Jacy Ippolito, *Associate Professor*, Salem State University

Heather Kindall, *Associate Professor*, University of Arkansas

Evan Ortlieb, *Professor*, St. John's University

Laurie Sharp, *Assistant Professor*, West Texas A&M University

Emeritus Member, Jack Cassidy

Emeritus member, Mary Ellen Skidmore

Emeritus Member, Barbara Klebanow

Welcome our new Treasurer… Jonathan W. Hill is currently a doctoral student and graduate teaching assistant at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi. Before becoming a graduate teaching assistant, he taught middle school English Language Arts and Reading for seven years. He earned his Bachelor of Arts and an 8-12 ELA teaching certificate from Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi and his M.Ed in Educational Leadership from University of North Texas. His research interests include self-efficacy of teachers and teacher candidates, as well as emerging forms of literacy (e.g., digital literacy).

Welcome our new Secretary… Patricia Durham is currently Associate Professor at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas and Coordinator for the Masters Reading/Reading Specialist Program. She served as President of the Texas Association for Literacy Education (TALE) from 2015-2016. Her research interests are in reading teacher and reader identity, content language literacy, and understanding how readers develop metacognition.

Technology Spotlight: Focus on Professional Development

Virtual Book Studies

The following section shares the experiences of Amy Sharp and Matt Panozzo, both educators in Texas, as they led two virtual books studies of Stephanie Harvey and Annie Ward's *From Striving to Thriving: How to Grow Confident, Capable Readers*. Although they shared the same goal of engaging literacy professional throughout the study, Amy used Facebook as her platform, while Matt used Padlet. Perhaps the experiences of Amy and Matt will spark ideas among members of the Specialized Literacy Professionals SIG for leading additional virtual book studies.

Hosting Virtual Book Studies on Social Media: The Why, What, and How

By Amy Sharp *National Board Certified Teacher and Baylor University EDd Student*

"Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family."
--Kofi Annan addressing World Bank Conference in 1997 (Their World, 2018)

Knowing Your Why and What

There is no doubt that anyone who picks up this newsletter is a literacy advocate and change agent. Reading the quote from Kofi Annan cited above is preaching to the choir. Each of us has our "How I Became a Reader and Writer" story and journey, and for most of us, that story is our "why" in our field.

When reading Kofi Annan's quote, I flashed back to a moment I became privy to a secret about my father. It was the day I realized my dad could not read. "I made this for you today in class," I said to him handing the construction paper card, still sticky from misplaced glue and glitter. He looked at it, smiled, and looked at me, and I saw it. The struggle to read my words. I studied him as he gazed at the text pretending he could not see it well; even rubbing his eyes and squinting at times. I suddenly saw he was a master at hiding his inability to read; saying, "Read it to me? It's been a long day, and you're a good reader". I wondered if he used this tactic a lot when he was in high school prior to dropping out. I wondered if his inability to read hampered him at work and from attaining a better paying job. I wondered if his coworkers knew this secret and aided him as I did soon after hearing him ask for help. In that single, vulnerable moment, I saw his "why" for us, his three children. We were to get an education to progress our family. That had always been a non-negotiable, and I saw why that day.

I learned literacy is power.

My father's "why" motivated me throughout my 15-year journey in education to help others become literate and powerful. I saw my dad in every family I served with illiterate parents who put the hope of the future on the backs of their children. Yet, I struggled to help my budding readers and writers, and though I felt validated when other professionals shared the same battle, I saw and felt the loss as my student and family progressed to the next grade level and then the next, showing little if not some progress.

I have read many professional books, journals, and blogs about literacy to feed my "why". You name it, and I am sure I have read it. I have a plethora of tools in my belt to offer students at any reading ability, yet the book title of Stephanie Harvey and Annie Ward (2017) grabbed me immediately — *From Striving to Thriving: How to Grow Confident, Capable Readers*. What perfect adjectives to describe my readers and families. I was hooked soon after hearing a plug about her professional book at ILA in Boston.

Harvey's book compiles literacy research and best practices in a simple, approachable, and inspirational manner urging educators to remove "struggling reader" to "striving reader".

The book is sectioned into three parts and is rooted in national standards:

- Trust: trust yourself to make wise decisions informed decisions for your students
- Teach: remember, effective teaching takes place through research and assessment
- Transform: belief in the transformative power of reading

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Each chapter is divided into general parts, making the reading accessible:

- A vignette
- Research: three studies or bodies of work that support the chapter
- Actions: strategies that you can use to make an immediate difference
- Assessing the reader in the round (ARR): questions to guide your teaching

Stephanie Harvey and Annie Ward's book is a text I share with colleagues who express they are at a loss with how to reach their striving students and how to share literacy's power with families. I refer to it often to ensure teachers are empowered to embark on sharing the power of literacy with their students. Many teachers find it applicable to their practice because there are sets of lessons in the book to use as resources to support planning and application for striving readers.

Thankfully, I had the opportunity to share the book nationally through the Texas Association for Literacy Education (TALE) this fall through a virtual book club on Facebook.

Navigating The How

Choosing a text rooted in the "why" is the first hurdle in this planning. Authenticity is key! Now what?

Here's a Quick Step-by-Step Guide:

1. If possible, poll your audience to inform text selection and purpose. #personalizedlearning
   - Knowing the why informs the what. In some instances, a group or team could poll interested staff and/or members.
   - Our organization sent a Google Form to better understand our members' professional interests and needs.
2. Decide how book club members will interact with the text and each other and choose a platform.
   - I chose a cognitive-based approach; a focus on the reader's cognitive understanding of a text, minimizing individual interpretations and emphasizing the content in the text. This approach focuses more on the ideas in the texts and suggests that the goal should be the acquisition of knowledge and the incorporation of the knowledge into teachers' professional schemas. It implies the selection of books based on their ability to build upon, expand, and alter teachers' conceptual frameworks. Accordingly, book club activities would focus on ways to enhance the construction of new understandings.
   - After some troubleshooting and discussion, our organization chose to create a private Facebook group as the platform.
3. Choose a group manager/ moderator.
   - It is important your moderator is knowledgeable of the content and tool. I volunteered myself for this work and am comfortable with most virtual platforms because of my previous work.
4. Create and establish a timeline for reading and discussion.
   - Keep the reading and professional season in mind. With this study, the reading was paced over the course of five weeks.
5. Share timeline through various outlets.
   - Confirm with others the timeline. It is best to gain insight on a schedule before making it public.
   - Once approved, be sure to share it through multiple platforms (virtually and in print).
   - Be sure to promote with time for educators to purchase the book.
6. Draft discussion questions and share for feedback.
   - To do this, I decided to take what Twitter calls a "slow chat" format. I did not tie our readers with a specific date and time. I gave a range for our educators to comment on the assigned reading and encouraged comments and questions.
7. Launch!
   - I launched with a video to introduce myself and set up some norms for the group. This is an optional step, and I believe it was one of our members appreciated.
   - I encouraged members to introduce themselves, too.
8. Reflect- often.
   - It is important to do this throughout the course of any book club. Yet, as a moderator of a virtual one, it is a vital step that reflection on the process and interaction of others on the platform occurs. The more involvement members have online the better the learning flourishes.
   - Do not get discouraged. Every educator has the best intentions when learning new things. If

engagement is down, it could be the season of the job. Keep the enthusiasm for the work high and encouraging for those who are able to attend and let others know they can chime in when able.
- Thank your educators frequently and often for any and all participation.

I encourage you and your teacher leader community to model the thirst for learning by starting a book club in your organization, team, or network. It will only add to your ability to help along your students and teaching team(s).

Closing Remarks

The journey to a literate life is different for everyone. I value and embrace that truth. Knowing your "why" in our profession and feeding it with the knowledge to grow its capacity is a never-ending cycle in our field. Sometimes in this journey, your "what" to stay rooted in your "why" is grown by learning from a professional book. Then, there are times when the journey allows you to share it with others. If that outlet is a virtual book club, you were given some steps on how to start one.

Remember to stay true to your work; only good things will come from it. Happy reading and leading!

References:

Harvey, S., & Ward, A. (2017). *From striving to thriving: How to grow confident, capable readers.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

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Additional Resources:

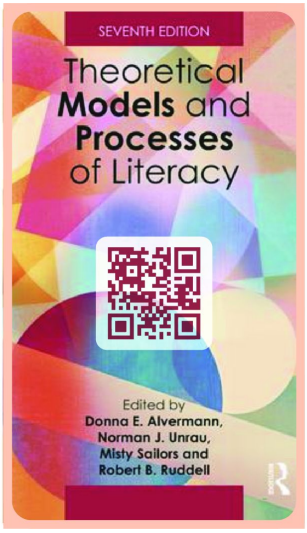
Bues, C. (2015, September). Online teacher book clubs: Promoting a culture of professional development. *Edutopia.* Retrieved from: https://www.edutopia.org/blog/teacher-book-clubs-promoting-professional-development-cheryl-boes

Burbank, M.D., & Kauchak, D. (2010). Book clubs as professional development opportunities for preservice teacher candidates and practicing teachers: An exploratory study. *The New Educator, 6,* 56-7

Did you know about this ?

Member's Publication

Alvermann, D., **Unrau, N.**, **Sailors, M.**, & **Ruddell, R.** (Eds.). (2019). "Theoretical models and processes of literacy" (7th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.



The 7th edition of Theoretical Models and Processes of Literacy (TMPL7) consists of 30 chapters that feature emerging as well as more established ways of theorizing contemporary issues of research and instruction, including relations of power and global shifts in populations. This new edition re-emphasizes that theory lies at the core of literacy research, instruction, and policy. As such, the editors of the volume encourage readers to continue inquiry and discovery into the multiple ways the frameworks represented in TMPL7 impact our communities of investigation and practice.

Catch more member publications on page 9-10!

Using Padlet for Professional Book Studies

By Matthew Panozzo *Middle School Teacher* Houston, Texas

As a full-time middle school teacher and doctoral student, my time is precious. When it comes to professional development, I want something meaningful, practical, and flexible. Nothing is more frustrating than stressing over sub lessons so I can attend an all-day PD that could have been covered in a one-hour after-school webinar. So, when I found out Amy Sharp was planning a social media-based book discussion for Stephanie Harvey and Annie Ward's (2017) *From Striving to Thriving* (see Virtual Books Studies on page 3) and there were non-Facebook users who wanted to join, I kept the aforementioned characteristics of PD in mind and thought of an alternative option that would be meaningful, practical, and flexible.

Since the text was already meaningful and practical, I just needed to find a forum that would allow for flexible participation over the five weeks the discussion would run. I opted to use Padlet, a collaborative online resource for making bulletin boards that allow users to have discussions, share materials, and post videos. Unlike video conferences, users can access and contribute to Padlet at a time convenient for them. And unlike social media, participants are not required to have an account to contribute. Participants only needed the provided URL and password to access the bulletin board.

For the first week, I posted a set of norms to establish our online etiquette standards. In addition to setting these norms, I asked each participant to introduce themselves to build a sense of community while also giving participants a chance to familiarize themselves with the platform. It helped that some users had worked with Padlet in other settings, so it became a living document as they added photos and attachments to extend the conversation.

From then on, I would post new questions each week of the discussion. *From Striving to Thriving* provided many great questions for reflection, so each week we selected a few from the assigned chapters. In addition, we asked participants to share *Aha! Moments* and personal experiences as related to each chapter. Like social media, Padlet provided many options for interacting with posts. Participants could *like*, rate, and even comment on posts.

In addition to asking questions, I also posted videos from Scholastic where Stephanie Harvey shared her top ten tips for improving the classroom reading experience. Personally, I knew September and October were busy times. If someone was unable to keep up with the reading schedule but still wanted to participate, these were quick informational pieces that parallel the text. The videos also acted as simple reminders to reinforce what was being learned.

Over the course of the five weeks, we compiled a pool of resources and experiences that supplemented the reading. To keep the learning alive and the resources available, we utilized Padlet's export features to download a "live" PDF that maintains the URLs of all the shared resources and organizes the posts. This was shared with the participants as a natural follow-up to the book discussion.

As you plan developmental or enrichment experiences for teachers on your campus or pre-service teachers, remember to find methods that are meaningful, practical, and flexible.

References

Harvey, S., & Ward, A. (2017). *From striving to thriving: How to grow confident, capable readers.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

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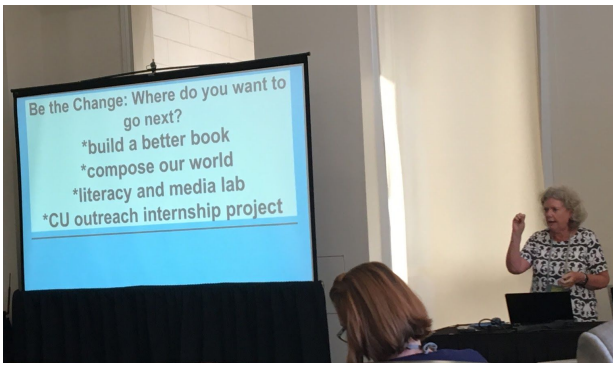
And … Looking Back

ILA-SLP Session

July 22, 2018 Austin, Texas



The 2018 ILA SLP session included a panel of three experts in the area of digital literacies. Antero Garcia, from Stanford University, began the panel discussion with three big ideas about using digital tools as "playful tools." He explained that 1) technology is fluid and that information can be shared across many platforms; 2) we need to consider the context and not just the tool itself in isolation; and 3) tie relationships and values into technology use. Antero emphasized that tools are "vessels" through which we can center people and use to embark on journeys. Next, Jill Castek (University of Arizona) discussed a project where educators gather each summer for an institute experience at the University of Rhode Island. During interactive workshop sessions, they share ways to apply digital literacy in transdisciplinary ways and subsequently engage in three-hour work periods to collaboratively create an inquiry project that is authentic and student-focused. Finally, Bridget Dalton, from the University of Colorado – Boulder, shared a project that uses cutting-edge technology (3D printing) to design tactile picture books for youth who are visually impaired. The "Build a Better Book" Project involves many people working together using project-based and inquiry learning.

An Update from the Committees

Membership Committee. The Specialized Literacy Professionals SIG has a diverse membership made of doctoral students, faculty members, researchers, and K-12 educators. Together, we support the SIG's mission of helping literacy professionals:

- keep abreast of recent efforts to develop standards and assessments for those delivering reading/literacy services;
- actively communicate with other professional organizations;
- take a proactive stance on issues involving literacy professionals;
- provide a forum for the professional development of all literacy professionals;
- conduct research relevant to literacy professionals**.**

Our membership committee continue to develop ways to support the SIG's mission and are proud to announce our new **mentoring program** for doctoral students and new faculty members interested in conducting research related to specialized literacy professionals. Visit our website for more information: http://www.literacyprofessional.org/

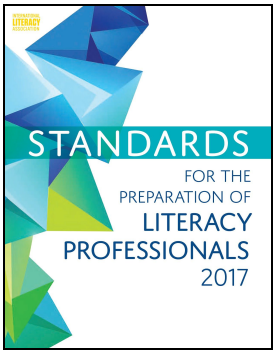
Research Committee. The specialized literacy professionals Research Group led by Evan Ortlieb, Diane Kern, Jacy Ippolito, and Wolfram Verlaan created a survey that was distributed nationally to K-12 teachers and literacy specialists to determine their level of awareness and acumen for addressing issues of diversity within literacy instruction. Additional respondents are sought to increase our sample size. Please consider sharing this link to others who are K-12 teachers: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvkc11wmRGvrQYteg3lbmIByaaqaznGtC94KIjFB1xyZjzIQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

This research project aims to establish a baseline that will serve towards creating a framework of effective practice for using diversity as an advantage in classroom pedagogy. Just as successful corporations hire diverse minded individuals to work together, teachers must be equipped to view and address diversity as an asset in their classrooms.

In addition, we will soon be starting the process of creating a survey to measure the degree with which literacy specialists and coaches are equipped to scaffold digital literacy instruction within their schools and districts. This project stems from the well-attended SIG 2018 ILA session on this same topic, led by digital literacy experts in the field.

Awards Committee. The newly created Jack Cassidy Award for Scholarly Contributions recognizes scholars whose research is not only timely, aka hot, but also has the potential to impact specialized literacy professionals. The Awards Committee, headed by Evan Ortlieb, Earl H. Cheek Jr., Kristin Anderson, and Kim Skinner are currently seeking nominations for scholarly works from the year 2018 that have the potential for widespread implications or immediate impact to specialized literacy professionals. Nominees must be a member of ILA and SLP as well. Please consider submitting a nomination to Evan Ortlieb at ortliebe@stjohns.edu before March 1, 2019.

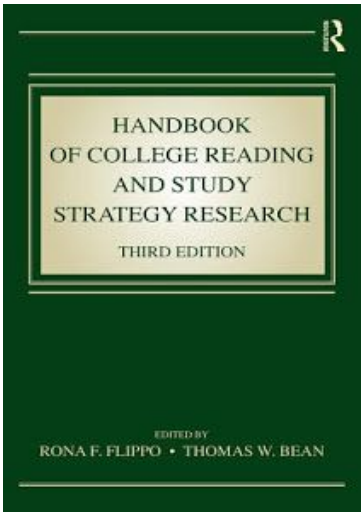
Social Media Committee Report. The Social Media Committee is currently working to support the recently published *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals* on the SLP Facebook page. We envision one member starting a discussion thread related to one standard or topic each month and keeping the conversation going by posting links to articles, websites, and/or videos. Additional topics are the various roles of the SLP and university preparation of SLP candidates. We hope to engage our members during these discussions and support one another as we implement them by sharing strategies and resources.



Highlighting....

Member's Publications

Published in June 2018, the ***Handbook of Reading and Study Strategy Research*** *(3rd ed.),* Rona F. Flippo & Tom Bean (Eds.), published by Routledge / Taylor & Francis.



Published in 2017, a four volume set of books, ***Reading: Major Themes in Education*****,** Rona F. Flippo (Ed.): Volume I (begins with Huey 1908 and ends with Shirley Brice Heath 1982); Volume II (begins with Applebee & Langer 1983 and ends with Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson 1991); Volume III (begins with Anderson & Nagy 1992 and ends with Guthrie & Wigfield et al. 2004; Volume IV (begins with Leigh Hall 2005 and ends with Afflerbach 2016).

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The ISBN is: 978-1-138-01894-5

Our Members Publish

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Please complete the below form as completely as possible; be sure to include your **email address** and **IRA number**.

Please make out the check to **Specialized Literacy Professionals** and mail it along with the form to:

Jonathan Hill
557 Parade Dr.
Corpus Christi, TX 78412

Please share copies of this form with others who might be interested. Contact Jonathan Hill for any questions regarding membership (litprofmembership@gmail.com).

Name: _____ IRA Membership #: _____
Position: _____ Institution Name: _____
Home Address: _____ Institution Address: _____
_____ _____
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Membership is also available online:
http://www.literacyprofessional.org/

Ways to become involved:

- Join a committee
- Participate in the mentoring program
- Share your research
- Attend the annual session at ILA
- Join our Facebook community