

Annenberg/CPB
Professional Development Workshop Guide

Making Meaning in Literature:

A Workshop for Teachers, Grades 6–8

A nine-part professional development workshop
for grade 6–8 literature and language arts teachers

Produced by Maryland Public Television

Making Meaning in Literature: A Workshop for Teachers, Grades 6–8

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About the Workshop

Overview

Making Meaning in Literature: A Workshop for Teachers, Grades 6–8 gives teachers like you—literature and language arts teachers working with middle grade students—two important opportunities.

Its videos, Web site, and guide introduce the theory and practice of building active literary communities in your classroom. Together, these resources explain how effective readers engage in literature and how you can support your students as they become effective readers actively engaged in short stories, novels, poems, and drama.

This workshop also gives you a chance to think about what you are currently doing in your classroom, and examine principals and practices other teachers like yourself have adopted to see if they can enhance your work with students.

In each workshop session, eight teachers from around the country meet together to talk about some of the important issues you face every day—from assessment to text selection to encouraging class discussion and more—delineating how they have met classroom challenges by evolving a community of active and engaged readers of literature. As they talk about the theory behind their work, you will visit their classrooms to see those theories in action. These teachers work in a variety of community settings, from rural to urban, and with an assortment of socioeconomic levels, from the very poorest communities to the more affluent. Their students also represent a gamut of possibilities, including those who are just acquiring English as their second language, differently abled learners, and those performing at grade level, as well as those whose reading levels span the K–12 spectrum and beyond.

In these various settings, you will see how teachers encourage their students to immerse themselves in the world of the text. You will observe them as they encourage learners to pose and answer their own questions of the text by moving through the story world using their logic, intuition, and common sense. You will follow them as they make connections between the text and their lives, and as they move beyond the text to evaluate their journey through its words as a literary experience.

Through their conversation, teachers will clarify the experiences you see by explaining why their work helps students become more effective readers. In doing so, these teachers are reflecting the theories first delineated by Dr. Judith Langer, Director of the National Center for English Learning & Achievement, State University of New York, Albany (CELA). During a decade of research on the habits of the mind of successful readers, Dr. Langer found that effective readers are those that interact with literature to form their own rich and highly nuanced pictures of a text. These ever-changing pictures, which Dr. Langer calls envisionments, are formed and grow as students read, talk, and write about literature. For more information on Dr. Langer's highly validated research and its implications for the classroom, we encourage you to look at other workshops and libraries constructed around this philosophy, available in video, print, and online. These professional development opportunities are part of the project called ***Envisioning Literature*** (www.learner.org/envisioningliterature). Dr. Langer has served as the chief content advisor for all the workshops and libraries in this series.

In a classroom that supports this approach to interacting with literature, the teacher is no longer the sole source of information about a text, or the arbiter of what is a correct or incorrect interpretation of its words. The text itself is not looked at as a source of information, but rather as an experience and an opportunity for readers to develop and use strong mental muscles. Their individual interpretations, strongly supported in the text, become more important than simply finding answers to closed-ended questions the teacher asks.

Instead, in an envisionment-building classroom, the task before readers is more open-ended. They read to explore the entire universe of the story world; to predict and verify events and character development; to pose, build, and refine theories about what is happening there and what they can learn from it. They can then look back on their interaction with the text to evaluate it as a literary experience, looking at the author's skill in using language, posing ideas, and offering possibilities. They also look to other readers, in their classroom and beyond, to try on alternative impressions of the text and refine their own ideas. Simply put, they read literature as literature, not as a nonfiction article or a "how-to" book, where the sole purpose is to converge on kernels of information.

The teachers and students you will meet in this workshop are at various points on the road to making the ideal envisionment-building classroom a reality. We hope you will join them on that path.

About the Workshop, cont'd.

Workshop Descriptions

Workshop 1. Introducing Our Literary Community

In this workshop program, you will meet the eight teachers who will guide your experience, and take a look at their communities, schools, and students. In conversation, the teachers share the principles that guide their work with literature and students. Their thoughts are woven into a framework offered by Dr. Judith Langer, who talks about the ways effective readers interact with text and the ways teachers can support these learners.

Workshop 2. Encouraging Discussion

Introduced by Dr. Langer, this program concentrates on discussion and its importance in helping engaged readers go further in the text. The featured teachers converse about ways to encourage whole class and small group discussion, the importance of asking the right question to provoke thoughtful discussion, and ways of making the discussion inclusive, folding in both talkative and reticent students. Their discussion is punctuated by visits to a variety of classrooms where discussion flourishes.

Some of the texts that are featured in these discussions include Langston Hughes' short story "Passing," *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis, *Fig Pudding* by Robert Fletcher, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *Letters From a Slave Girl: The Story of Harriet Jacobs* by Mary E. Lyons, *Holes* by Louis Sachar, the nonfiction text *To Be A Slave* by Julius Lester, and the picture book *The Lady With a Ship on Her Head* by Deborah Nourse Lattimore.

Workshop 3. Going Further in Discussion

Since discussion is so central to the growth and development of a literary community, the third workshop program also concentrates on this activity. Here the teachers talk about ways to recognize good discussion, adding personal anecdotes about ways in which they participate in or step out at various points in the discussion to help students go further in their understandings of the text. The group also looks at different stimuli they use to provoke and maintain good discussions in their classrooms. These principles are illustrated by classroom footage showing rich and involved student discussion, and expanded by commentary from Dr. Langer.

Classroom discussion focuses on several novels, including *On My Honor* by Marion Dane Bauer, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis, *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon M. Draper, *Among the Hidden* by Margaret Peterson Haddix, *Necessary Roughness* by Marie G. Lee, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, and *Dangerous Skies* by Suzanne Fisher Staples. Short stories are also featured, including "Passing" by Langston Hughes and "Guests in the Promised Land" by Kristin Hunter.

Workshop 4. Diversity in Texts

In this program, Dr. Langer and the participating teachers talk about the importance of choosing rich texts for their students as a group or as individuals, enumerating various criteria they have developed for this initial classroom decision. Supported by commentary from Dr. Langer, the group looks at the part student interests play in selecting the right text, building thematic study units using a variety of texts, and helping students select texts that meet their needs or help them go further in their experiences with literature.

The group examines a number of texts for consideration, and classroom visits show activities related to many of them. These texts include contemporary novels such as *Year of the Impossible Goodbyes* by Sook Nyul Choi, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis, *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon M. Draper, *The Skin I'm In* by Sharon Flake, *Fig Pudding* by Robert Fletcher, *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George, *Gaucha* by Gloria Gonzalez, *Among the Hidden* by Margaret Peterson Haddix, *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse, *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton, *Zachary Beaver Came to Town* by Kimberly Willis Holt, the Redwall Series by Brian Jacques, *Heaven* by Angela Johnson, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, *Slam* by Walter D. Myers, *Somewhere in the Darkness* by Walter D. Myers, *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick, the Harry Potter Series by J. K. Rowling, *Crash* by Jerry Spinelli, and *Dangerous Skies* by Suzanne Fisher Staples.

About the Workshop, cont'd.

Classic novels the group talks about include *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, and *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare. Short stories that get the group's attention include *The Day It Snowed Tortillas: Tales From Spanish New Mexico* by Joe Hayes, "Guests in the Promised Land" by Kristin Hunter, and *Couple of Kooks and Other Stories* by Cynthia Rylant. Poems by Langston Hughes and Gary Soto are also considered.

Workshop 5. Student Diversity

The varied viewpoints necessary for valuable class discussions are celebrated in this program. The group talks about the diverse ways in which their students are unique and how their interactions with literature are shaped in part by their life experiences, distinctive thoughts, and previous reading experiences. They examine the value of using the lens of multiple perspectives to examine a work of literature, and offer suggestions of ways to encourage each student to contribute to the ongoing classroom conversation. Dr. Langer validates their comments, offering her thoughts on involving students' diverse voices in a way that honors all of their contributions.

Some of the texts that the group talks about include *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* by Beverly Tatum, *Taking Sides* by Gary Soto, *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick, *Holes* by Louis Sachar, and *The Day It Snowed Tortillas: Tales From Spanish New Mexico* by Joe Hayes.

Workshop 6. Literature, Art, and Other Disciplines

In this program, the featured teachers explore various ways in which students can use the fine arts to express their impressions of a text, and why this kind of activity should be encouraged to make sure that every voice in the classroom can be heard. The group also looks at ways to expand meaning by interweaving literature with other disciplines, including social studies.

Dr. Langer offers her thoughts on this integration, explaining how learners grow cognitively and expand their impressions of the text by using other means of looking that the fine arts and other disciplines offer.

Several classroom projects demonstrate how learners expand their growing interactions with texts as they work in the fine arts. Their projects are centered on texts such as *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, *Smoky Night* by Eve Bunting, *Thunder Cave* by Roland Smith, *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli, *Among the Hidden* by Margaret Peterson Haddix, *Lyddie* by Katherine Paterson, and *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis.

Workshop 7. Assessment

In a classroom where students are actively engaged in literature, there is a need to find authentic assessment vehicles that measure their progress as readers and thinkers. In this program, the featured teachers identify useful criteria—including portfolios and literature logs—that they have used in both formal and informal assessments that measure this process. The group stresses the importance of ongoing assessment, and the worth of looking at several measures to construct a holistic picture of a student's progress. Dr. Langer augments their comments by stressing the importance of measuring how students are thinking and how they are growing as effective readers. The group also talks about integrating their evaluation strategies in the milieu of traditional and high-stakes assessments, while maintaining an emphasis on the individual growth of the readers in their classrooms. Dr. Langer explains that encouraging readers to become more actively engaged in the text also gives them firm grounding as thinkers and achievers on tests such as these.

Classroom visits that enhance this workshop program specify these principles, featuring teacher–student conferences, student projects, and peer assessment.

About the Workshop, cont'd.

Workshop 8. Planning and Professional Development

In order to grow in their careers, teachers need a great deal of sustenance. In this program, the participating teachers talk about the ways in which they fulfill this need as they develop individually and as members of a professional community. The group invites us into their classrooms to look at the way they have grown professionally, stimulated by their peers, their membership in professional organizations, and their willingness to seek out new thinking on literature and teaching literature. Dr. Langer also describes the personal and professional benefits of an active professional life.

Cameras follow the featured teachers to professional development meetings where they interact with their peers, noted educators, and authors as they find many ways to grow as professionals.

Workshop 9. Starting in September...

The concluding workshop program takes a close look at the first steps teachers take in getting ready to help their students become successful and engaged readers. With classroom visits during the first few days of classes as their backdrop, the teachers in this session talk about everything—from classroom arrangement to long-term goals—that enters their minds as they start another year and plan for success. Dr. Langer underscores their remarks with advice for teachers who want to recreate the kinds of classrooms they have seen featured in this workshop.

In this program, featured teachers invite the audience into their classrooms as they begin to set the tone for the year through an assortment of activities focused on literature. Some of the texts they turn to in these first days include *Holes* by Louis Sachar, *Gaucha* by Gloria Gonzalez, *Little Things Are Big* by Jesus Colon, and *Smoky Night* by Eve Bunting.

Workshop Components

This guide provides everything you need to know to conduct this workshop, either with colleagues or on your own. (Note: if you are taking this workshop alone, you are your own site leader.) The workshop consists of activities carried out with your colleagues on-site (Workshop Sessions) and those to do on your own (Between Sessions). See Helpful Hints for Site Leaders on p. 6 for more information on preparing for workshop sessions.

Workshop Sessions (On-Site)

Weekly workshop sessions may be scheduled around live broadcasts, in which case you will want to begin at least 30 minutes before the scheduled broadcast. You may prefer to pre-record the programs on videocassette and schedule the sessions at a time that is more convenient for all participants. Sessions work best when scheduled for a minimum of two hours. Each session consists of three parts:

Getting Ready

In preparation for watching the program, you will engage in approximately 30 minutes of discussion and activity.

Watch the Workshop Video

Then you will watch the 60-minute video program. Within each program, there will be opportunities to pause the tape for discussion. If you are watching a real-time broadcast, you may want to consider the questions posed while viewing the program, and discuss them later.

Going Further

Wrap up the workshop with an additional 30 minutes of discussion and activity.

Between Sessions (On Your Own)

Homework Assignment

You will be assigned readings, exercises, and Classroom Extension activities that put into use practices learned in the last workshop, or prepare you for the next one.

Ongoing Activities

You may want to carry on these activities throughout the course of the workshop.

Keep a Journal: You are encouraged to keep a journal, including thoughts, questions, and discoveries from the workshop itself and learning experiences that take place in your own classroom.

Visit the Web Site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature: Go online for materials and resources to deepen your understanding and implementation of the practices shown in the workshop.

Share Ideas on Channel-Talk: You can subscribe to an email discussion list and communicate with other workshop participants online. To subscribe to Channel-TalkLit6to8, visit <http://www.learner.org/mailman/listinfo/channel-talklit6to8>.

Extension: Classroom Connections

We provide activities that can help you put the practices you learn in this workshop into use in your own classroom.

Additional Reading

Go online to find more resources and suggested readings to deepen your understanding and implementation of the practices shown in this workshop. Go to the *Making Meaning in Literature: A Workshop for Teachers, Grades 6–8* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature.

Helpful Hints for Site Leaders

Successful Workshop Sessions

These guidelines will help you conduct successful workshop sessions, particularly the Getting Ready and Going Further segments. These 30-minute, pre- and post-video group discussions will help participants better understand the video programs and enhance the workshop experience. Getting Ready prepares participants for what to focus on during the video programs and Going Further provides the opportunity to analyze and reflect on what they saw.

Designate Responsibilities

Each week, someone should be responsible for facilitating the workshop sessions. This may be the registered "site leader" or another volunteer, or you may choose to divide and rotate duties among several participants. For the purposes of these instructions, we will refer to the site leader as facilitating the sessions.

Prepare for the Session and Bring the Necessary Materials

The site leader should review the entire session in this guide before arriving for the session, as well as reviewing the Materials Needed for that session. The site leader will be responsible for bringing enough materials for the participants. If you are viewing the video programs on videocassette, the site leader may want to preview the programs.

Before the First Session

You may want to photocopy this guide for all participants so they may follow along, refer back to ideas covered in the session, or have their homework assignments handy. Or, you may direct them to the workshop Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature to print the guide themselves (direct them to "Support Materials"). Either way, you will want participants to have the guide before the first session, so they will come prepared. Be sure participants know:

- They should bring a journal and a pen or pencil to each workshop session, including the first;
- There are suggested reading assignments prior to the first session; and
- It would be helpful if they were to review the first session in the guide before arriving.

Keep an Eye on the Time

We have suggested the amount of time you should spend on each question or activity. While these times are merely guidelines, you should keep an eye on the clock, particularly if you are watching a live broadcast. You may want to set a kitchen timer before you begin Getting Ready to ensure that you won't miss the beginning of the video. If you are watching the workshops on videotape, you will have more flexibility if your discussions run longer.

Record Your Discussions

We recommend that someone take notes during each discussion, or even better, that you tape-record the discussions. The notes or audiotapes can serve as make-up materials in case anyone misses a workshop.

Share Your Discussions on the Web

The workshop sessions serve as a starting point to share and think about the workshop ideas. Encourage participants to continue their discussions with participants from other sites on Channel-Talk at the workshop Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature.

Materials Needed

Site Leader:

You will need to assemble the following materials to help you in using the videos in a professional development workshop:

- A VCR and monitor to show the video clips
- A dry-erase board, flip chart, or large pieces of art paper for recording major points raised in session discussions
- The materials needed for each session are listed below. Other materials may be needed for activities suggested in this guide. Consult the guide materials related to each video clip to find out the scope of these activities and plan your session accordingly.

TIPS

- Be sure to position the monitor at a place where all participants can view it easily.
- Adjust the lighting to avoid reflections or glare.
- Check the connections between the VCR and TV or monitor, and make sure they are both plugged into a working outlet.
- Read the sections of the guide devoted to activities and discussion questions related to each clip several days before the workshop. Note materials that are needed and gather them before your session begins.
- Before the first workshop session, be sure to inform workshop participants that they should bring a journal and a pen to each session.
- The activity sheets and teacher resources listed here are contained within this guide. Make copies for each participant.

Workshop 1

Student Activity Sheet: Student Survey

Student Activity Sheet: Coat of Arms

Video Program: **Workshop 1. Introducing Our Literary Community**

Workshop 2

Teacher Resource: Sample Quick Write Response

Teacher Resource: Insert Method Bookmarks

Video Program: **Workshop 2. Encouraging Discussion**

Workshop 3

Student Activity Sheet: Book Buddies: Letter-Writing Topic Suggestions

Video Program: **Workshop 3. Going Further in Discussion**

Note: *Envisioning Literature* by Dr. Judith Langer is referenced throughout the workshops. While not required, it is recommended reading for participants. *Envisioning Literature* is available from the Teachers College Press, Columbia University, Copyright 1995. ISBN 0-8077-3464-0.

Bibliographic information and URLs for reading assignments and suggested reading are available within each chapter of this guide and on the *Making Meaning in Literature: A Workshop for Teachers, Grades 6–8* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature.

Materials Needed, cont'd.

Workshop 4

Teacher Resource: Evaluate the Literature in Your Classroom

Video Program: **Workshop 4. Diversity in Texts**

Workshop 5

Teacher Resource: Bringing Diversity to the Foreground

Video Program: **Workshop 5. Student Diversity**

Workshop 6

Teacher Resource: Sketch to Stretch

Teacher Resource: Reader's Theater

Teacher Resource: Save the Last Word for the Artist

Video Program: **Workshop 6. Literature, Art, and Other Disciplines**

Workshop 7

Student Activity Sheet: Be as Smart as an OWL

Student Activity Sheet: OWL Log

Student Activity Sheet: Book Group Presentations

Teacher Resource: Designing and Using a Rubric

Teacher Resource: Designing and Using Portfolios in Envisionment-Building Classrooms

Video Program: **Workshop 7. Assessment**

Workshop 8

Teacher Resource: Four Principles of Envisionment-Building Classrooms

Video Program: **Workshop 8. Planning and Professional Development**

Workshop 9

Student Activity Sheet: Say Howdy

Student Activity Sheet: Be as Smart as an OWL (from Workshop 7)

Student Activity Sheet: OWL Log (from Workshop 7)

Teacher Resource: First-Line Text Teasers

Teacher Resource: Where Are They Coming From?

Video Program: **Workshop 9. Starting in September...**

Note: A supplementary resource is *Making Meaning in Literature: A Video Library, Grades 6-8*. While not required for the workshop, viewing of the videos from the library can provide additional insight into envisionment-building classrooms. Visit the Web site at www.learner.org/envisioning-literature and select *Making Meaning in Literature: A Video Library, Grades 6-8* for more information.

About the Contributors

Featured Teachers/Schools

Joe Bernhart, Fondren Middle School, Houston, Texas

Joe Bernhart received his degree in secondary English (K–12) from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee in 1994. Following a year of substitute teaching in Milwaukee public schools, he took a full-time language arts position at Fondren Middle School in Houston, Texas, where he has worked for the past six years. He currently teaches seventh-grade magnet and pre-AP students.

Mr. Bernhart is a lead teacher in the Houston Independent School District. He is also active in the Greater Houston Area Writing Project. During 2000, he assisted as a convention planner for the annual middle school convention of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and participated in the National Writing Project, a month-long professional development workshop.

Believing that literature helps people understand themselves and the world in which they live, Mr. Bernhart uses contemporary young adult literature to engage students in discussions on such critical topics as race, equality, and justice. He is committed to teaching in an urban district.

Fondren Middle School in Houston, Texas, is an urban magnet school for math and science. Tracking divides students into a magnet (or honors) program, a pre-AP program, and a general program. While most students in the general track can walk to school, many magnet and pre-AP children are bused from outside the immediate area. The majority of children are either African American (60 to 65 percent) or Latino (20 to 30 percent), with a range of other ethnicities, including Asian, accounting for the rest of the student body. The school has only a small percentage of Anglo students. Although Fondren's enrollment has decreased in the last few years, it stands at more than 1,000 students, packed into a building designed for 800. All the lockers have been bolted shut, and the school uses portable T buildings to house some classes.

Class size ranges from 30 to 35 students, creating a challenge for teachers like Joe Bernhart who employ collaborative learning strategies in their classrooms. Nevertheless, the setup of Mr. Bernhart's room emphasizes the importance of students working together. Depending on the activity, students sit either at pairs of desks facing each other or in groups of four to five desks pushed together. Because the school uses 90-minute periods on an A/B schedule, Mr. Bernhart has ample time for student-centered activities. He draws on a mix of informal and authentic assessments to gauge children's progress. Students can demonstrate mastery through such alternatives as skits, talk shows, scrapbooks, acrostics, and movie recommendations to a character.

The district mandates certain skills that teachers must cover, but does not require the use of particular texts, leaving teachers free to select the books they will use in their classrooms. With his seventh-grade magnet and pre-AP students, Mr. Bernhart tries to introduce engaging young adult literature, often with a Latino or African American protagonist. Although students must pass the high-stakes Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), Mr. Bernhart does not teach directly to the test, believing that he addresses the necessary skills through his regular curriculum.

Dr. Janis Currence, Ed.D., Stephen Decatur Middle School, Berlin, Maryland

Dr. Janis Currence holds an undergraduate certification in special education and elementary education from the State University of New York at Geneseo, a master's degree in education from Salisbury State with a concentration in supervision and administration, and a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from the University of Maryland's School of Education at College Park.

Dr. Currence has over 30 years of teaching experience in a variety of settings, including primary and secondary special education, a program for socially and emotionally challenged secondary students, and regular English classes at the fourth-, sixth-, and eighth-grade levels. She also has extensive experience working with teaching professionals. She has been a writing resource teacher for teachers of eighth- and ninth-grade English in Worcester County, Maryland, and has provided inservice programs for teachers in Worcester, Wicomico, and Dorchester Counties. In 1998, as an adjunct professor at Salisbury State University, she taught a course entitled "Reading and Writing in the Content Areas for Secondary Teachers." She has served as both professional education consultant and teacher/consultant for the Eastern Shore Writing Project, and co-directed two writing project

About the Contributors, cont'd.

Summer Institutes at Salisbury State University. Dr. Currence presently teaches seventh-grade Integrated language arts at Stephen Decatur Middle School in Berlin, Maryland. Teaching on the classroom level—or as she says, "in the trenches"—is her true professional calling.

Stephen Decatur Middle School is located in Berlin, five miles from Ocean City on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It is the largest of Worcester County's three middle schools, with approximately 650 students in grades seven and eight, of whom 30 percent are minorities. Decatur draws its students from three areas—a retirement community, a tourist destination, and a rural town. Most live outside walking distance. Families represent a wide range of incomes. Many older family members, especially those in Asian American households, are employed at nearby Perdue Farms, while many others work in Ocean City's thriving tourism industry. Like all public schools in Maryland, Stephen Decatur had administered the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) at the end of the year. In 2002, the Maryland State Department of Education withdrew the test, and is planning for a new statewide assessment program. Results from the MSPAP have been used to rate the school and have no bearing on whether a child is promoted. Students also take the Maryland Functional Reading and Writing tests, which they must eventually pass in order to graduate from high school.

Although its students come from neighborhoods pocketed by both ethnicity and social class, Decatur has a close-knit school community. The building's four wings house separate schools-within-a-school, each with its own teaching team and student population. This fosters a sense of security and identity by allowing children to interact within a smaller group of peers and adults. Teaching teams, two at each grade level, encourage interdisciplinary learning and create a standard set of behavioral and academic expectations across the day. Jan Currence's seventh-graders know, for instance, that they must use correct punctuation not only in integrated language arts (ILA), but also in science and social studies. Dr. Currence's team includes two math teachers, two ILA teachers, one social studies teacher, and a science teacher, as well as an educational assistant and an in-class special education resource person. The team has regular meetings to facilitate crosscurricular planning. Class periods are double-blocked to allow greater freedom of instruction.

Within a seventh-grade class of 26 to 28 students, Dr. Currence may have reading levels spanning from second grade through college. According to county mandates, she must focus on particular genres—realistic fiction, historical fiction, mythology, poetry, and drama—but within this structure, she may select the individual texts her students will examine. To accommodate the range of interests and skill levels in her classroom, and to give children a voice in their own education, she allows students great flexibility in what they choose to read. She also reads books aloud to engage children in challenging discussions of texts that are above their reading level but not their comprehension. Individualized learning goals and performance-based assessments are the norm, and Dr. Currence regularly enlists students' help in developing rubrics and grading criteria.

Dorothy Franklin, DeWitt Clinton Elementary School, Chicago, Illinois

Dorothy Franklin began her teaching career 16 years ago as a coordinating teacher for four-year-olds at a suburban Chicago daycare center. After two years, she accepted a position as a teacher's aide in the reading center of the Evanston Township High School. During her 10 years there, she received her elementary teaching certificate with an endorsement in language arts and embarked on a master's degree in reading. She also developed and implemented a pull-out program for students living below the poverty line who scored below the 35th percentile on standardized tests in reading and math.

For the past six years, she has taught sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade English language arts at DeWitt Clinton Elementary School in Chicago. Her hope is to inspire students who did not receive adequate literacy experience in the critical primary years. In the past, she sponsored a student newspaper that received critical acclaim from Mayor Richard Daley, and she now runs a drama club where she helps students write and produce several shows each year. She has also taken a leadership role in establishing a schoolwide reading team at Clinton, coordinating quarterly meetings, sharing standards with school staff, and providing one-to-one support for new teachers.

In 1999, Ms. Franklin won the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching from the Golden Apple Foundation in Chicago. She then joined the foundation's newly formed Reading Interest Group to draft a Reading Bill of Rights, which has been ratified by the foundation and accepted by the mayor. The committee, in concert with Chicago Public School administrators, is spearheading a campaign to assist all schools in identifying or hiring reading specialists.

About the Contributors, cont'd.

In 2000, Ms. Franklin participated in the Chicago Area Writing Project Summer Institute and now acts as teacher/consultant, offering demonstrations for other educators. She has delivered presentations at Clinton and Northeastern Illinois University on literature-based instruction. She has published an article, "Thinking About Thinking: A New Look at Comprehension," in the *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, and most recently co-wrote a proposal to open a new charter school in Chicago.

DeWitt Clinton Elementary School is an urban K–8 school in Chicago, Illinois, that serves a primarily first-generation immigrant population speaking more than 17 different languages. The majority of students are Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Russian, or Bosnian, with a small minority of other nationalities and ethnicities. Many of Clinton's children require ESOL or bilingual assistance. Approximately 50 percent are below grade level in core subjects, and 85 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch. In the tradition of a neighborhood school, all of the approximately 1600 students live within walking distance of school grounds. Clinton experiences a high rate of transience as families move into and out of the surrounding areas.

Classes at Clinton hover around 28 to 30 children of all abilities. In Dorothy Franklin's double-blocked language arts classes, the average reading level is fifth-grade, with some students as low as third and others as high as ninth. Ms. Franklin also has students in various stages of the bilingual program. Teachers meet in grade level teams to discuss the status and wellbeing of individual students. Language arts teachers for grades 5–8 also hold weekly meetings to discuss issues of curriculum.

Illinois does not mandate texts that schools must teach, only skills and concepts that they should address. Some schools have created a list of approved texts, but teachers at Clinton have free rein in selecting their material. Franklin has chosen to use novels and self-selected reading materials. Torn between the order of a traditional classroom and the excitement of collaborative learning, she struggles to strike a suitable balance in her own room. Students usually sit in rows, with desks grouped in twos or threes to facilitate discussions. At times, however, they arrange their seats in a large circle so they can participate in a whole-class dialogue.

Ana Hernandez, Howard Doolin Middle School, Miami, Florida

Ana Hernandez earned her bachelor's degree in English education from Florida International University in April 1997. While at the university, she substitute taught in the Dade County Public Schools and was a lead teacher for SummerLink '95 and '96, a six-week program for inner-city minority children. She has served as both vice president and president of the university's Future Educators of America and was selected to the Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society. She was also founder and student editor of *EduTrends*, a monthly newsletter for the Future Educators of America Organization.

In 1998, Ms. Hernandez was honored as the Sallie Mae Outstanding First-Year Teacher for her work in the Campbell Drive Middle School in Homestead, Florida. A member of the Phi Delta Kappa National Education Honor Society, she has also served as vice president and president of this organization.

Ms. Hernandez is currently working toward a master's of science in education at the University of Miami, focusing on reading and learning disabilities. She teaches sixth- and seventh-grade language arts to gifted students at the Howard A. Doolin Middle School in Miami.

Named after a Dade County music teacher, **Howard Doolin Middle School** in Miami, Florida, is a fine arts school with an emphasis on character education. The school building was constructed in 1997 and has a spacious, open feel. It serves the rapidly growing, racially and economically mixed neighborhood of West Kendall. Most children walk to school or take a bus paid for by their families; the district does not arrange transportation if students live within two miles of school. The student population is approximately 82 percent Hispanic (many from South America) with a smaller percentage of African Americans, Caucasians, and Asian Americans. Although many students are bilingual, classes are conducted in English. Students take the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), an essay and short-answer exam, at the end of each year. The school receives a grade based on student results.

Doolin boasts a Gifted and Talented (GT) program into which students are admitted based on an IQ test or teacher recommendation. Class periods last nearly two hours, in an ABC schedule, allowing adequate time for a wide range of activities within a single period. Because GT classes are looped in the sixth and seventh grade, teachers like Ana Hernandez have the additional luxury of working with the same students for two full years before passing

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them to their eighth-grade instructors. As a department, the language arts teachers establish a scope and sequence that prescribes what standards and objectives teachers should address but allows for teacher discretion in how to meet these goals.

Hernandez strives to incorporate connections from literature into what students are studying in other subjects and into their own lives and choices. She employs a mix of both formal exams and project-based assessments in her classroom to monitor student progress.

Barry Hoonan, The Odyssey School, Bainbridge Island, Washington

Barry Hoonan, a two-time participant in the Fullbright Teacher Exchange to Great Britain, has 19 years of experience in public school classrooms. He currently teaches the 5/6 cluster at Odyssey, an alternative school for grades 1–8 on Bainbridge Island, Washington, which features multi-age classes and a high level of parent involvement. Although Hoonan teaches all subjects in his cluster, his true passions are literature and writing.

Mr. Hoonan has a master's degree in teaching from Lesley College in Massachusetts. Winner of the 1990 Christa MacAuliffe Award for teaching excellence in Washington State, he has recently seen his work published in *Beyond Reading and Writing* by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and *Literature Circles and Response* (Christopher–Gordon Publishers, 1995). He is also a member of NCTE's Reading Commission, and he serves as a consultant for school districts conducting workshops on integrating reading, writing, poetry, and the arts into instruction. Mr. Hoonan's teaching style has been influenced by such notables as Judith Langer, Linda Rief, Nancie Atwell, Donald Graves, and Jerome Harste.

The Odyssey School is an alternative public school on Bainbridge Island, eight miles from Seattle by ferry. It is one of four elementary schools serving this community of 20,000. When it opened five years ago, it had 75 students in grades one through six, organized into multi-grade groupings known as clusters. This year, the school grew to 125 students with the addition of a 7/8 cluster. Class size at Odyssey is on a par with that at other island elementary schools. Students are looped, staying with the same instructor for two years. Although approximately 80 percent of older family members commute to Seattle, the school represents a wide range of incomes and includes artisans and local farmers as well as stockbrokers and lawyers. Families must agree to volunteer between five and 10 hours a month at the school before they may enroll their child. With twice as many applications as available spots, the school has a lengthy waiting list and is currently evaluating whether it needs to undertake further expansion—and if so, how to achieve that growth while maintaining the current sense of community.

Odyssey is located in a spacious old elementary library building and is designed to have the nurturing feel of a one-room schoolhouse. Students call teachers by their first names. The elementary grades spend part of each morning together, and they share computers and other resources as needed. Each elementary cluster has one teacher who is responsible for all instruction. Within such a small environment, families are a vital resource, sharing their skills and expertise in the classroom. For instance, since Barry Hoonan's expertise lies primarily in language arts, he recruits family members who are strong in math and science to help teach advanced concepts to his cluster. Teachers of grades 1–6 coordinate a three-year cycle of instruction together. Although the state mandates that children must know certain concepts by certain grade levels, it has been supportive of Odyssey's alternative approach to education.

Like all public school students in Washington, children at Odyssey must take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in grades four, seven, and 10. However, for Mr. Hoonan, assessment is far more than a measure of what students have accomplished; it is also a tool to help them grow. Mr. Hoonan keeps a daily journal on the progress of individual students and targets five or six students a day for individual assistance. He has children maintain a portfolio of their work, and actively involves them in establishing the criteria on which they will be evaluated. In addition, he asks families to conduct formal interviews with their children at various points in the year, using a sheet of questions designed to show students the progression of their thinking over time.

Linda Rief, Oyster River Middle School, Durham, New Hampshire

Linda Rief is a full-time eighth-grade language arts teacher at Oyster River Middle School in Durham, New Hampshire. She is also an instructor in the University of New Hampshire's Summer Reading and Writing Program and has taught graduate courses for Northeastern University and Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts. She is the author of *Seeking Diversity: Language Arts With Adolescents* (1992) and *Vision and Voice: Extending the Literacy*

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Spectrum (1999)—a book and companion CD—both published by Heinemann. Several book chapters and articles have appeared in *Portfolio Portraits* (ed. Donald Graves and Bonnie Sunstein), *The Portfolio Standard*, *Language Arts*, *Learning*, *Educational Leadership*, *Instructor K–8*, and other professional journals. She is co-editor with Maureen Barbieri of *All That Matters: What Is It We Value in School and Beyond?* (Heinemann, 1995) and *Workshop 6: The Teacher as Writer* (Heinemann, 1994). With Barbieri, she co-founded and co-edited, for five years, *Voices From the Middle*, a journal for middle school teachers, published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). She has also designed and hosted two television series for the Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In 2000, Ms. Rief was the recipient of NCTE's Edwin A. Hoey Award for excellence in English Language Arts teaching, a finalist for New Hampshire Teacher of the Year, and the recipient of the New Hampshire English/Language Arts Teacher of the Year. In 1999, she received the Richard W. Halle Award presented by the middle school assembly of NCTE, and in 1988, she was the recipient of one of two Kennedy Center Fellowships for Teachers of the Arts.

Although Ms. Rief continues to conduct numerous workshops throughout the U.S., sharing what her students know and are able to do as readers, writers, and learners, her full-time commitment remains with her students.

Oyster River Middle School is located in Durham, New Hampshire, not far from the state university. Serving 800 students in grades five through eight, the school strives to maintain its focus on students as individuals, and on their particular educational, social, and environmental needs as adolescents. Students are assigned to a team of four teachers (social studies, science, math, and language arts) who will work with them for the duration of the school year. Teams are responsible for between 100 and 110 students, and class size stands at 25 to 28. Every quarter, a different specialist in music, art, health, or life skills joins the team. Students do not have to pass a high-stakes exam at the end of middle school, but they do participate in testing through the New Hampshire Educational Improvement and Assessment Program (NHEIA). The state evaluates school performance based on the results.

Classes at Oyster River are heterogeneously grouped and meet every day for 55-minute periods. The daily schedule includes a common planning time, allowing teams to check on the progress and wellbeing of individual students in a timely fashion and to meet with family members as necessary. Teams also use these daily meetings to explore possibilities for making crosscurricular connections—particularly those with local significance. One year, for instance, in a collaborative project with the music teacher, Linda Rief's eighth-grade students studied the nearby Lowell mills from various academic perspectives and capped the experience off by writing and producing a musical.

Ms. Rief incorporates multiple intelligences and alternative assessment opportunities into her teaching, believing that young adolescents need choice in what they study and how they express what they have learned. Her students keep portfolios and academic journals to provide a long-term view of their learning, and they decide which pieces to submit in their portfolios for a grade. They may even place work from other classes in their language arts portfolio. Ms. Rief believes in using evaluation as a teaching tool, saying that "evaluation should keep them moving forward, it shouldn't stop them." Together, she and her classes establish grading criteria, and students often grade their work before she does. They also complete quarterly self-evaluations to measure their own progress over time.

Tanya Schnabl, Sherburne–Earlville Middle School, Sherburne, New York

Tanya Schnabl, a sixth-grade language arts teacher at Sherburne–Earlville Middle School in Sherburne, New York, has made a career of helping students connect literature to their own lives. She began teaching 14 years ago at a high school in Guilderland, New York. Within a year, she moved to Farnsworth Middle School, also in Guilderland, and found her calling. Hired as a language arts and social studies teacher, she came to realize that integrated, thematic units helped students make connections across the curriculum. Schnabl worked closely with other teachers to plan these kinds of experiences.

In 1993, Ms. Schnabl wrote a chapter in the book *Children Exploring Their World: Theme Teaching in Elementary Schools*. Soon after, her classroom was highlighted in *Instructor* magazine for a theme on architecture. In 1995, she was chosen to be an assessor for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. While in Guilderland, she also created a summer "Boost" program for struggling readers.

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Ms. Schnabl works with teachers throughout the area, with an emphasis on implementing alternative teaching methods to help students be more successful learners. She encourages teachers to communicate with each other and find ways to integrate subject areas in order to make learning more meaningful to students.

Sherburne–Earlville Middle School is located 15 minutes from Colgate University in rural New York State. The school building houses both the middle school (450 students in grades 6–8) and the high school, each with its own principal. Sherburne's school district covers the largest area of any in the state. Historically, the region has relied on farming for its economic base, and although a few of the school's families are employed at the university or nearby Proctor & Gamble, many others live on working farms or in trailers. Students often have to help with chores before school or to babysit siblings in the afternoon until a parent arrives home. Approximately 47 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch. As is typical of the region, minorities make up only one or two percent of the student body. Despite the wide range of family incomes, people describe Sherburne as a close-knit, friendly town with a strong sense of community. The school actively encourages the involvement of families in their children's education, and they have recently begun a family literacy program to improve the reading skills of parents and other relatives.

According to standardized tests administered at the end of eighth grade, Sherburne–Earlville is a typical rural school. The school climate, however, is vibrant, and both the faculty and the administration are committed to their students. Over the past several years, Sherburne–Earlville has hired additional language arts teachers to reduce class sizes to the current 10 to 16 students per section. The school now hopes to do the same with the other core subjects. Classes meet for 80-minute periods every other day, but beginning in Fall 2001 sixth-graders will have 80 minutes of language arts every day. Next year also marks the first time the school will institute heterogeneous class groupings. Every classroom has four computers with Internet connections. In addition, Sherburne has worked to provide teachers with the tools they need in the classroom—for instance by assigning them to interdisciplinary teams who share a small subset of the larger student population. Teams meet two or three times a week to brainstorm possibilities for integration and crosscurricular collaboration, to discuss the welfare of their students, and to share their support for one another. The school also joins with representatives from the local elementary and high schools to map a cohesive curriculum across grade levels.

Within the framework established by the school, teachers are free to design their own curriculum. For Tanya Schnabl in her sixth-grade language arts class, the only mandate is that students must have 10 polished pieces of writing in their portfolio by the end of the year. Ms. Schnabl is a proponent of using literature to enhance a study of history and cultures. This year, in collaboration with a social studies teacher, she helped her students orchestrate a Greek festival, an Egyptian funeral procession, and a feudal feast. The culmination of extended study, these celebrations were held after school to allow families to attend. The final crosscurricular activity of the year involved math, science, social studies, and language arts classes as students assessed the impact of a proposed dam and met at a mock town council meeting to lobby for or against its construction.

Ms. Schnabl enlists family members in their children's learning through frequent notes or phone calls. She also involves students in assessing their own academic performance, asking them to evaluate their work according to a rubric and to determine what they would have to do to "bump it up" a grade.

Flora Tyler, Picacho Middle School, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Flora Tyler graduated from New Mexico State University in 1980 with a degree in elementary education and an endorsement in K–12 special education. For 12 years, she worked as a special education classroom teacher of students in kindergarten through ninth grade, incorporating Nancie Atwell's vision of readers and writers workshops into her own special education setting. More recently, she has shifted to a regular classroom in the hope of reaching a larger population of students. She currently teaches sixth-grade language arts at Picacho Middle School in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Beginning in the 2001–2002 school year, she will teach seventh-grade language arts at Sierra Middle School.

In addition to challenging her students to take risks and stretch their expectations, Ms. Tyler has also worked as mentor to teachers who want to expand their own repertoire of classroom skills and strategies. In this capacity, she has reached beyond the walls of her own school to present at various conferences at the district level.

About the Contributors, cont'd.

Ms. Tyler credits the work of Yetta Goodman, Donald Graves, Nancie Atwell, Lucy Calkins, Regie Routman, Linda Rief, David Lazear, Thomas Armstrong, and Howard Gardner as influential to her understanding of how people learn, as well as the approach she takes to assessment in the classroom.

Picacho Middle School in Las Cruces, New Mexico, is founded on the principles of collaboration and interdisciplinary learning. Students in grades six through eight work with crosscurricular, thematic units that have bearing on children's daily lives and decisions. The school hopes to help students learn to make smart choices based on facts, not myths and misperceptions. Classes are also designed to help students feel good about themselves through a sixth-grade team emphasis on multiple intelligences. As proof that this philosophy works, the school touts its high daily attendance and active programs in music, art, athletics, and community service.

The student body is predominantly Hispanic, with smaller populations of Anglo, African American, Native American, and Asian students. While some children come from affluent households, many are from migrant families or live in shelters and other temporary housing. Language barriers and a lack of staff to conduct home visits complicate the process of contacting family members. Although a few schools in the area have begun dual prep programs where all students are taught in two languages, Picacho continues to use an ESL approach in which students are mainstreamed with help. As required by the state, all sixth-graders take the New Mexico Writing Assessment, in which students have three hours to respond to a writing prompt. The state also mandates that students in grades six through eight take the TerraNova, which helps determine what rating a school receives.

Class size at Picacho ranges from 23 to 25 students meeting in 85-minute blocks. Teachers at each grade level are divided into two teams, each responsible for 120 to 150 children. They have one 45-minute common planning period. In Flora Tyler's sixth-grade team, teachers collaborate to sketch out the highlights and themes for the year's curriculum, including at least two weeklong interdisciplinary units per semester. The team's emphasis is on challenging all students through individualized expectations and support. Ms. Tyler also works with the second language arts teacher to plan common objectives for each quarter, although their classes usually take different routes to arrive at these goals.

Ms. Tyler's classroom is a celebration of different learning styles. She frequently uses music, art, and imagery to set a mood or make a point—for instance, reinforcing the meaning of punctuation by having students click, clap, and snap the different rhythms each mark produces. Students are required to incorporate multiple intelligences into any presentation, and may ask their classmates for their help and expertise in completing a project. Ms. Tyler's goal is to instill a sense of self-worth in each of her students by helping them to discover and develop their areas of strength.

Advisors and Content Experts

Judith A. Langer, Ph.D.

Judith A. Langer is professor of education at the University at Albany, State University of New York. She specializes in studies of language, literacy, and learning. Her research focuses on how people become highly literate, on how they use reading and writing to learn, and on what this means for instruction.

Her major works examine the nature of literate thought—the knowledge students use when they "make sense" and the ways in which their learning is affected by activities and interactions in the classroom. She has studied reading and writing development, the ways in which understandings (envisionments) grow over time, how particular literacy contexts affect language and thought, and the contribution of literature to literate thought.

She is presently studying the professional and classroom features that accompany English programs where students are "beating the odds" in literacy. Her work on envisionment building has had a major impact on literature instruction and assessment. She serves on many advisory boards and national reform groups involved in reconceptualizing literacy education.

Dr. Langer has published in a wide variety of journals and collections. Her books include *Reader Meets Author/Bridging the Gap*; *Understanding Reading and Writing Research*; *Children Reading and Writing: Structures and Strategies*; *Language, Literacy, and Culture: Issues of Society and Schooling*; *How Writing Shapes Thinking: Studies of*

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Teaching and Learning; Literature Instruction: A Focus on Student Response; Literature Instruction: Practice and Policy; and Envisioning Literature: Literary Understanding and Literature Instruction. Effective English Instruction will soon be published.

Dr. Langer is director of the National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement (CELA) funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. She is also chair of the Department of Educational Theory and Practice.

Dr. Langer serves as the chief content advisor for all the *Envisioning Literature* workshops and libraries, including ***Conversations in Literature*** and ***Making Meaning in Literature: A Video Library, Grades 6–8***.

Dale Allender

Dale Allender currently serves as the associate executive director of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). A former teacher in the Iowa City Community School District, Mr. Allender has also lectured at Grinnell and Coe Colleges. He has also served the language arts community as an editorial board member of *The New Advocate*, as representative-at-large for the Alliance for Curriculum Reform, and in his current position as the NCTE Liaison to the Iowa Council Teachers of English and Language Arts Executive Board.

A recipient of the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Native American Literature fellowship and numerous other awards, Mr. Allender has also served as a consultant and curriculum developer for a number of media projects, including *Songmasters: The American Road*, a music recording of traditional socially conscious songs performed by contemporary popular music artists; *Tutu and Franklin: A Journey Towards Peace*, a dialogue between Desmond Tutu and John Hope Franklin and 21 international, multicultural high school students; and *Regret To Inform*, an award-winning documentary on widows from the Vietnam War, featured on PBS.

Some of Mr. Allender's recent publications include "Deep Reading: Building a Schematic Bridge Across World Mythology and Multicultural Literature" which appeared in *Multicultural Review*, "The Myth Ritual Theory and the Teaching of Multicultural Literature," "Standing on the Border: Issues of Identity and Border Crossing in Young Adult Literature," and "African and African American Voices and Experiences" which is included in *Adventuring With Books*.

Arthur N. Applebee, Ph.D.

Arthur N. Applebee is professor in the School of Education, University at Albany, State University of New York, and (with Judith Langer) is director of the federally sponsored National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement. The Center has an active research and development agenda in elementary and secondary instruction, in effective uses of technology, and in teacher education.

During his varied career, Dr. Applebee has worked in institutional settings with children with severe learning problems, in public schools, as a staff member of the National Council of Teachers of English, and in research and professional education. He joined the faculty at the University at Albany from Stanford University in 1987, as part of a SUNY-wide Graduate Research Initiative designed to place the University at Albany at the forefront of literacy research in the United States.

With degrees from Yale, Harvard, and the University of London, Dr. Applebee's work focuses on how children and adults learn the many specialized forms of language required for success in school subjects, life, and work. His numerous books and articles focus in particular on issues in curriculum and instruction in reading, writing, and the English language arts. Since the early 1970s, he has also worked with the National Assessment of Educational Progress, helping to design, implement, interpret, and report a continuing series of evaluations of the educational attainment of U.S. students.

An internationally recognized expert, Dr. Applebee consults at the national, state, and district level on effective approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Dr. Applebee is a former editor of *Research in the Teaching of English*, a past president of the National Conference on Research in Language and Literacy, and a recipient of the David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English, from the National Council of Teachers of English.

Ana Hernandez: See above

About the Contributors, cont'd.

Frank Horstman, Ph.D.

As the K–12 specialist in English language arts for the Maryland State Department of Education, Frank Horstman works with a variety of issues related to language development: curricular design, instructional implementation, assessment, and school improvement. Specific projects have ranged from kindergarten—MMSR training, to primary—managing the Reading Excellence Act Grant, to middle—range finding for MWT and MSPAP, through high school—collaborating on the development of the English High School Assessment. While he received his formal training in applying theories in cognitive psychology, linguistics, and classical rhetoric to improving writing instruction, Dr. Horstman credits the training he received from his English, journalism, and foreign language students with helping him develop a very practical perspective on English language arts. He also believes that serving as both a staff development facilitator and an administrator has helped him to see the learning process from still other perspectives. Dr. Horstman welcomes the opportunity to support educators across Maryland in their goal to improve student achievement in English language arts.

Mara Johnson

Mara Johnson, a native of the District of Columbia, holds a bachelor's of science in elementary education from D.C. Teachers College with a minor in speech, a master's degree in reading from University of the District of Columbia, and certification in middle school foundations from National–Louis University.

Ms. Johnson has devoted her career to teaching in Washington's inner city schools, beginning at Meyer Elementary School where she taught grades three through six for 18 years. For the past 11 years, she has been a reading instructor at Garnett–Patterson Middle School (grades six through eight). At various points, she has served as building resource teacher, standards specialist, mentor teacher, the multicultural chairperson, member of the personnel selection and textbook selection committees, spelling bee coordinator, and sponsor of the ski club. She has also won two Teacher-to-Teacher Awards for her work on instructional materials designed to help children develop vocabulary, reading, writing, and speaking skills. During the summer of 2000, she worked as the assistant program manager for the Summer Arts and Smarts Program offered by the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation.

Elizabeth Penfield

Elizabeth Penfield is professor *emerita* of English at the University of New Orleans. She is the author of four books and numerous articles published in state, regional, and national journals, including *Arizona English Bulletin*, *English Language Arts Bulletin*, and the *ADE Bulletin*. Her book *Short Takes*, published by Harper Collins, is currently in its seventh printing. She is a contributor to the *Longman Bibliography of Composition and Rhetoric*, and her article "Freshman English/Advanced Writing: How Do We Distinguish the Two?" was published in *On Teaching Advanced Writing*. Together with Charles Moran of the University of Massachusetts, she edited the NCTE publication *Conversations: Contemporary Theory and the Teaching of Literature*. Penfield has also presented papers to many state, regional, and national groups, including the Conference on College Composition and Communication and the National Council of Teachers of English.

Ms. Penfield's principle areas of interest are composition and rhetoric, and contemporary literature. She has consulted on writing with schools throughout Louisiana and for the Wyoming Conference on Freshman and Sophomore English. She has also chaired the New Orleans Writing Project. At the University of New Orleans, she has directed the freshman program, chaired the English Department, and served as associate dean of Liberal Arts.

Linda Rief: See above

Notes
