

From the editors

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent
about things that matter.*

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

The new editorial team for *Literacy Teaching and Learning* is pleased to present our inaugural issue of *LTL*. In these pages, readers will encounter three internationally authored articles, each of which addresses “things that matter” for early literacy instruction. These manuscripts present arguments and empirically based findings that should have direct effects on the ways in which we educate and support our teachers and their students. It is our intent that the information and arguments presented here will cause many useful ongoing conversations and inquiries for the readers of *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, resulting in improved literacy instruction in the long run.

In contrast to current calls for teachers to choose between polarized positions regarding literacy instruction, Hamston and Scull (The University of Melbourne) present a strong argument in support of differentiated and multifaceted teaching for diverse students. Hamston and Scull caution readers that a strong adherence to standardized assessment results may cause a lack of differentiated instruction for those students who are most instructionally dependent, resulting in issues of equity and access. To the degree that our students across the world have access only to fragmented interventions developed on the basis of narrow definitions of literacy, schooling may fail to meet students’ needs.

Burroughs-Lange and Douëtil (The University of London) present the results of a study of the literacy achievement levels of 234 lowest-achieving children, approximately 6 years of age, in 42 disadvantaged, urban schools. Each of these schools utilized existing resources and expertise to provide inter-

vention to the lowest-achieving children. These interventions included Reading Recovery, daily reading with an adult, small reading groups with a teaching assistant, or assistance from teacher with specialist training. Lowest-achieving children in this study, however, who did not receive Reading Recovery lessons made very little progress. In contrast, students who received Reading Recovery instruction attained average expectations for literacy instruction. This study also evaluated classroom literacy in schools with Reading Recovery instruction ($n = 605$) and without Reading Recovery instruction ($n = 566$). Children in schools with Reading Recovery ended the year 4 months ahead of classrooms in schools without Reading Recovery, documenting a wider impact for an intensive early intervention based on high levels of teacher education and support. School systems are not responsible for the provision of “an intervention” to lowest-achieving children. Instead, school systems should provide proven, complete interventions matched closely to students’ early and immediate needs.

Wu and Anderson (University of Illinois) report on a study of second-grade Chinese children’s character identification strategies during oral reading. The authors report that the oral reading strategies of Chinese and English-speaking children are very similar, implying universal aspects of reading strategies that should effect teaching decisions within primary grade classrooms. The authors present findings that argue against the proposition that young readers use phonological, syntactic, and semantic cues in equal proportion. Instead, the specific context within which the young reader utilizes strategies may make one source of information more appropriate and useful on a moment-by-moment basis during oral reading. Wu and Anderson also found that poor readers were not as proficient as good readers in the triangulated use of phonological, syntactic, and semantic cues when identifying logographic characters during oral reading.

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