

# HIGHLIGHTS

of the Minnesota Reading Association,  
an International Reading Association  
affiliate

## President's Message

Debra Peterson

Dear MRA Members,

I have just finished reading the book *Making Assessment Matter: Using Test Results to Differentiate Reading Instruction* by Dr. Nonie Lesaux and Sky Marietta. I was so excited to read this case study of one school's journey as they used formative assessment data and student work to differentiate instruction during their core reading program. Their story is further exemplified by following four target students and their progress as readers. I was inspired by the work and reflection these teachers did as they collaborated with their grade-level teams to meet the needs of diverse students. The description of the conversations and processes used by this staff are then accompanied by multiple suggestions of ways to modify and apply some key principles for the effective use of data to other schools and contexts. I am especially enthusiastic about this book because it will be the topic of study in regional book clubs offered this summer by the Minnesota Academy of Reading. If you are interested in being involved in a book club, please email me at [peter328@umn.edu](mailto:peter328@umn.edu) and I will put you in contact with a leader in your area.

All participants in books clubs receive a free copy of the book. Book clubs will meet two times during the summer for about an hour a session. Participation in book clubs is free! Invite your friends and colleagues!

Then on Friday, September 25, Dr. Nonie Lesaux will be here in Minnesota! The day will be a combination of presentations by Dr. Lesaux followed by small group conversations led by reading professionals from around the state. During the small group discussions, Dr. Lesaux will participate in individual conversations with each group. This is a marvelous opportunity to meet and talk with the author herself! Dr. Lesaux is a professor of education at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Continued on page 2

## SPRING 2015

### What's inside

President's Message	1
Reading Councils	2
Conference Information	6

**Thank you for being  
an MRA member!**



## MRA's Mission Statement and Goals

*Minnesota Reading Association's mission is to actively promote lifelong literacy for all citizens. We encourage professional interaction among all organizations involved with literacy and provide resources for exemplary literacy practices and habits.*

- Supporting, Recognizing, and Celebrating Literacy Efforts across the State of Minnesota
- Promoting Networking and Collaboration in the Area of Literacy
- Providing Resources and Opportunities for Professional Growth and Leadership Development

## **Executive Committee**

**PRESIDENT** Debra Peterson

**PRESIDENT-ELECT** Sue Paasch

**VICE-PRESIDENT** Mary Lillestol

**PAST PRESIDENT**

**TREASURER** Linda Snowberg

**SECRETARY** Emily Hoeschen

**IRA COORDINATOR** Kari Ross

**MEMBERSHIP** Stephanie Brondani

**WEB MANAGER** Scott Voss

**MDE LIAISON** Cory Stai

## **Local Council Presidents**

**ARROWHEAD READING COUNCIL** Polly Tracey

**CENTRAL MINNESOTA READING COUNCIL** Laura Arndt

**SOUTHEAST READING COUNCIL** Heather Willman and Jill Magnuson

**SOUTHWEST READING COUNCIL** Cindy Whaley

**TWIN CITIES AREA READING COUNCIL** Kathy Fox

**MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF READING** Kate Kelly and Karen Moroz

**SECONDARY READING INTEREST COUNCIL** Risa Cohen

Copyright 2015. *Highlights* is the quarterly publication of the Minnesota Reading Association. All rights reserved.

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** Kathryn Bannon

Opinions expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily those of:

**Minnesota Reading Association**  
PO BOX 904, St. Cloud, MN 56301

**MNREADING.ORG**

# **Reading Councils**

## **Southeast Minnesota Reading Council**

### **Tech Talk**

By Heather Willman

Teachers in southeast Minnesota gathered on April 9<sup>th</sup> to learn more about how to enhance literacy skills through technology. Diane Jordan, first grade teacher at Harriet Bishop Elementary in Rochester, MN demonstrated how she uses kidblog to motivate her first graders to write! Next, Chrissie McKinnon, instructional technologist, shared some tools that support literacy including; biblionasium and chatterpix. Finally, Heather Willman shared a game that can be used as a formative assessment called kahoot. Teachers also shopped at a dollar book sale and earned 1 reading CEU for attending!

One of the participants commented, "This was really useful! I'm excited to go back and try some of these in my classroom tomorrow."

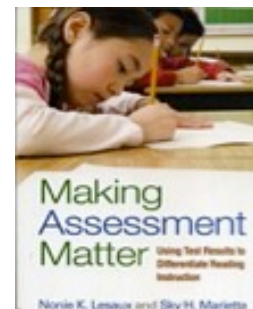


continued from page 1

Conversations with Dr. Lesaux will be held at the Minnesota Department of Education in St. Paul. The full-day event is \$75.00. Please consider participating in each of these powerful events! Opportunities like this are part of the wonderful benefits of being a member of a professional community like the Minnesota Reading Association!

Looking forward to learning with you,

Debra S. Peterson, MRA President



# Reading Councils Cont'd

## Twin Cities Area Reading Council

### Standards Based Literacy Instruction

#### TCARC January Workshop

by Sarah Rutledge

On January 6th the Twin Cities Area Reading Council held its winter workshop titled, *Good To The Core*. The evening began with a keynote by Scott Voss who addressed Minnesota's Core Standards. He used the analogy of the apple core, and how many people would just look at the core as something to eat around and then discard however, there is a value to the core and what we are discussing tonight is the strength and value of our core standards. Two breakout sessions were provided, one directed to the teaching of standards in the elementary grades and the other with a focus on content area literacy instruction at the secondary level.

Jess Giah and Beth Flottmeier presented on the implementation of the ELA standards and how knowledge of the standards and assessment help drive our planning and PLC work. Along with the ELA standards comes a new emphasis on text analysis. The language we use to teach literacy demonstrates this emphasis on analysis. One example of this change is that instead of asking students to make connections we require them to demonstrate an understanding of text, referring explicitly to the text.

It is important that our teachers have a deep and working knowledge of the standards because they are rooted in the CCR anchor standards, which are a collection of skills that students will need to be successful in college and careers of the future. PLC's are a place where teams can work together to carefully look at the standards and create meaningful lessons as well as look at the outcomes from formative and summative assessments.

Jess Giah shared with participants how she uses the ELA standards within her planning process to ensure that her lessons are meaningful, relevant and provide students with the skills needed to be successful with the standards. In her planning she demonstrates how important it is to understand what skills students will need to ensure success with the new instruction. Also, it is vital to understand what was asked of students in regards to the standard in the previous year and what will be expected of them in the next year. This full understanding of the progression of student learning within the standards will help to create lessons that meet the various academic needs of your students. Jess also emphasized the necessity to include, in your planning, the kinds of observable evidence you will collect to know that your students have proficiently met the objective (standard).

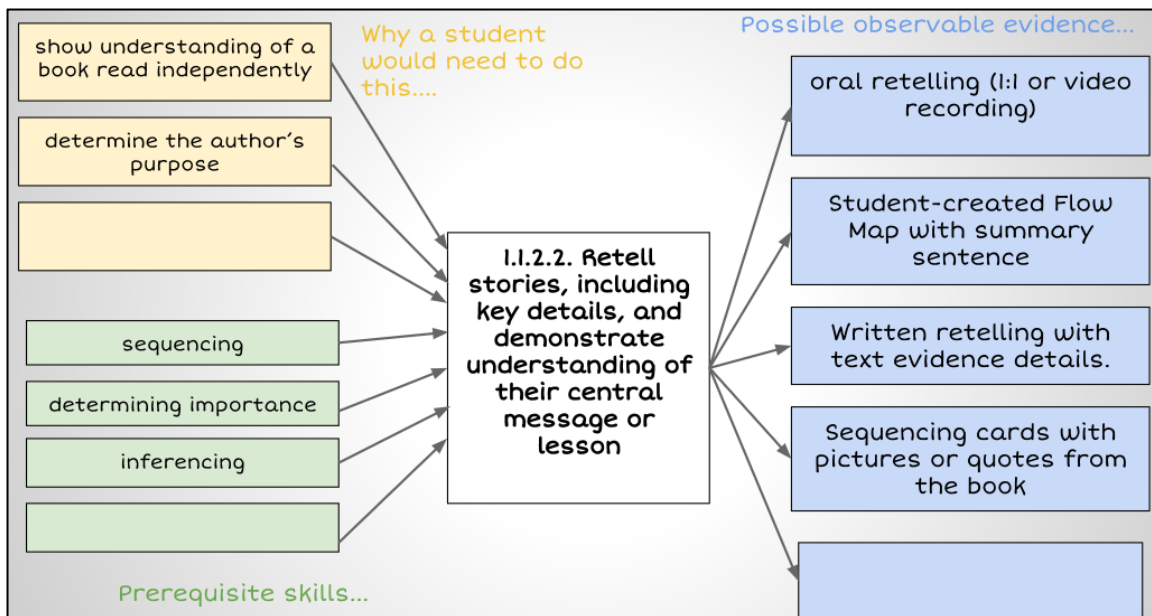
*See example of a planning format that Jess uses to plan her literacy lessons at the end of this article.*

The secondary breakout session was a focus on Content Area Literacy and was presented by Anna Resele and Paul Richardson of the St. Paul Public School District. The big ideas presented were:

1. Content area teachers are literacy experts.
2. Reading instruction must focus on the transferable skills to guide students to independence
3. Strategies and approaches need to fit content and context of the content area being taught.

Many of the strategies that we can teach students to understand complex text can and should be transferrable across content areas. We need to teach students when and where to use various strategies. As teachers, it is our job, to help students to understand the types of complex text used to learn various types of content and to teach them the strategies they will need to be successful with the content.

# Reading Councils Cont'd



This is the example planning template that Jess Giah uses to plan her lessons as seen at the Twin Cities Reading Council January Event.

## Secondary Reading Interest Reading Council

### SRIC Announces Its New Facebook Page



In an effort to connect with Secondary Reading Interest Council members, we have created a Facebook page where we are posting information about upcoming meetings and events, and adding different resources that could be of interest to any of us as reading educators. Please check out our page: <http://bit.ly/MRASRIC>. We are hoping that more members will post resources, pose questions they would like help answering, seek input from members about problems or challenges, and just in general use the page as a place to connect with one another. Even if you are not an SRIC member, we'd love it if you would "like" our page!

# Reading Councils Cont'd

## Minnesota Academy of Reading

The following letter was received by C.W. Johnson, President of the Minnesota Academy of Reading:

*Dear Minnesota Academy of Reading Special Interest Council:*

*It is our pleasure to inform you that the Minnesota Academy of Reading Special Interest Council has met all the requirements for the 2014-2015 Honor Council Program.*

*On behalf of the International Literacy Association Board of Directors we invite you to participate in a special event honoring council leaders for their outstanding contributions to the literacy profession and the International Literacy Association. Please plan to attend a Networking Social on Friday, July 17, 2015 prior to the start of the Council Award Ceremony at the Renaissance Hotel – Majestic Ballroom ....*

*We commend you on your leadership and your dedication to the literacy profession and hope that you will join us at the Council Awards Ceremony in St. Louis, Missouri.*

*Sincerely,*

**Council Advisory Team**

### **International Literacy Association**

While the details of the award ceremony are not of great significance, it **is** a great honor to have our Minnesota Academy of Reading Special Interest Council join the ranks of national literacy exemplary councils as recognized by the International Literacy Association.

Criteria for the award included documentation of an exhaustive list of achievements and initiatives, which are sampled here:

Membership	Community Involvement
International Connections	Board Membership and Governance
Communications	Events and Initiatives
Sustained Activity Over Time	

Credit goes to current and past members of the Minnesota Academy of Reading, of course, for their continued membership and involvement in council activities.

Special recognition and thanks go to Past-Presidents Catherine Kelly and Karen Moroz, who ably guided the MAR Board through the process of seeking Honor Council status. Catherine Kelly deserves special kudos and our gratitude for extraordinary efforts in documenting, compiling, and submitting the MAR application to ILA. She persisted in spite of a number of bureaucratic challenges that would have slowed others to a standstill.

Thank you all, and congratulations!



# Summer Conference Information



Please join us for the Minnesota Reading Association's 2015 Annual Conference

**honoring our past.  
envisioning our future.**

**Thursday, July 9, 2015**

**7:30 am - 3:30 pm**

Hamline University, St. Paul Campus

In addition to sessions from our Keynote Speaker, Nell Duke, Ed.D., there will also be a wide range of symposiums, break out sessions, and poster sessions for participants to attend. Topics include:

- Culturally relevant literacy instruction
- Middle and High School Instruction
- Best practices in Literacy Instruction
- Content Area Literacy

Sessions will be targeted to elementary, middle or secondary educators.

A professor of literacy, language, and culture and a faculty affiliate in the combined program in education and psychology at the University of Michigan and a member of the International Reading Association Literacy Research Panel, Duke's work focuses on early literacy development, particularly among children living in poverty. Her specific areas of expertise include development of informational reading and writing in young children, comprehension development and instruction in early schooling, and issues of equity in literacy education.

with  
Keynote Speaker

**Nell  
Duke**

Get registered now at [www.mnreading.org](http://www.mnreading.org)  
Questions? Contact Susan at [s.paasch@mnreading.org](mailto:s.paasch@mnreading.org)

**Registration Fee is \$150**, which includes a complimentary year's membership to MRA (current members will have a year added to their membership)

*The MRA Conference is being held in partnership with the Hamline University Literacy Institute, July 7-9.*