

Highlights

September 2010



of the Minnesota Reading Association, an International Reading Association affiliate

President's Message

by Julie Scullen



“These transformations reflect the constantly changing world in which we now live, where our ability to keep up is crucial.

“September is a time for change, for growth, and for new resolutions.”

In this issue

Reading Council News.....	2
Looking Back, Looking Ahead.....	4
IRA News	5
The Standards are Coming!	6
Work SMARTer, Not Harder	7
A Better Way to Spell.....	8
Mind- and Career-Expanding Opportunities.....	9
Raising a Reader	10
Quick Picks.....	11
Celebrate Literacy Award.....	12
Fall Symposium.....	13
Leadership in Reading Network...	14
Kao Kalia Yang discussion	15

While January is the traditional month to create “new year” resolutions, I find September to be a more appropriate time. September provides me with new energy, new possibilities, and the promise of new things to be learned. Each year I resolve, in September, to be a better educator, a better listener, and do a better job of staying ahead of paperwork required of every school professional. September also allows me a fresh opportunity to use the ideas I have gained in my summer of perusing new resources and educational journals.



Julie Scullen

Anything is possible in September, when school buildings smell of fresh paint and newly waxed floors. Sharpened pencils fill carefully selected backpacks. Pink erasers have yet to see their first mistake. Spiral notebooks have yet to be marred by doodles. Each September, teachers find their class lists and data reports transform into classrooms full of expectant, nervous faces.

For members of MRA, this September also involves transformation and renewed energy. We’ve started several new initiatives in the past year. Last spring, in order to maintain a growing momentum, each member of MRA was invited to provide feedback and suggestions to the MRA Executive Board through an online survey. That information was analyzed over the summer and used to plan events for the upcoming year.

For example, last September MRA formed a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education and created the Literacy Leadership Network (LLN). About 65 educators and administrators from around the state came together three times during the year to collaborate, share resources, and learn from each other. The success of that endeavor led to a transformed partnership. The LLN has become the Leadership in Reading Network (LiRN). LiRN members will immediately sense a strong emphasis on teaming and partnerships, finding that emphasis reflected in their ability to bring guests to each meeting.

Also last year, MRA began offering Seasonal Symposiums in addition to our yearly conference. Last year’s topics focused on assisting new teachers, resources for teachers of struggling readers, and a morning with author Kathy-Jo Wargin. Based on survey results, this year’s symposiums will be focused on our new K-12 Language Arts Standards, RtI, Legislative Advocacy, and Content Area Reading. Look for further details in this newsletter.

Our web presence is also growing. In preparation for our state conference, our conference chair, Scott Voss, was able to communicate information to members through podcasts – an MRA first. MRA has also created a Ning site, hoping to increase the amount of collaboration opportunities for members from all corners of our state. A Ning allows members to share documents and information immediately and on request. In the coming months, with the help of our fabulous webmaster, we’ll be adding more ways for each member to interact with others from Worthington to Duluth, from Roseville to Rochester.

Warm wishes for a wonderful new year, and all the best to you as you begin to tackle your own September resolutions!

Julie

Executive Committee

PRESIDENT

Julie Scullen

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Scott Voss

VICE-PRESIDENT

Jennifer McCarty Plucker

PAST PRESIDENT

Ilene Christian

TREASURER

Mary Johnson

SECRETARY

Sarah Haskett Rutledge

IRA COORDINATOR

Deb Sauer

MEMBERSHIP

Cindy Blagg

Local Council Presidents

ARROWHEAD READING COUNCIL

Stephanie Boyat

CENTRAL MINNESOTA READING COUNCIL

Sara Martini and Mary Van Dell

NORTHLAND READING COUNCIL

Toni Cox and Staci Marich

SOUTHEAST READING COUNCIL

Molly Ring

SOUTHWEST READING COUNCIL

Cindy Whaley

TWIN CITIES AREA READING COUNCIL

Teresa Langton and Neva Stoebner

MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF READING

Debra Peterson and Amy Smith

SECONDARY READING INTEREST COUNCIL

Julie Scullen

Copyright 2010. *Highlights* is the quarterly publication of the Minnesota Reading Association. All rights reserved.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Murna Rome

NEWSLETTER LAYOUT Vicki Palmquist

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

Minnesota Reading Association

13570 Grove Drive #280

Maple Grove MN 55311-4400

www.mnreading.org

Reading Councils

Central Minnesota Reading Council

St. Cloud Public Library at Your Fingertips

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2010

Registration 10:10 a.m.

Program 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Great River Regional Library
1300 W. St. Germain St., St. Cloud

Registration Deadline: Thursday,
September 16th, 2010

Don't let free educational resources

be a mystery!

We'll link outstanding

resources available through YOUR library system to the classroom.



This free workshop will feature:

- St. Cloud Public Library staff members will split group into elementary and secondary and present online resources available through GRRL system
- Library connections for reading growth
- Book talks – CMRC members will share new favorites

And, of course, coffee, various beverages, and morning nutrition.

Two (2) hours of C.E.U. available for attending this literacy workshop.

Send an e-mail with your registration information to:

sara.martini@isd742.org

— Sara Martini, President

Minnesota Academy of Reading

It has been a busy summer for many MAR members. Here are some of the activities that we have been involved in during the summer:

- Serving on the MTLE assessment review committee.

- Reviewing course syllabi from institutions of higher education for the Board of Teaching amended PEPER reviews. All teacher preparation programs around the state have been changed to meet the new BOT standards. This means new teachers should be entering the profession with even stronger backgrounds in reading instruction.

- Providing input on the MN K-12 English Language Arts Standards. This involved reviewing and providing feedback on the Common Core State Standards followed by the writing of additional components or wording to meet Minnesota state requirements (i.e. recognizing the contributions of native tribes). Thank you to Gail Jordan who served as the committee co-chair. She spent innumerable hours studying the standards and weighing them against current scientifically-validated reading research. Her contributions, along with all the committee members, added tremendously to the integrity of the new standards.

- Working collaboratively with MDE and MRA to plan the upcoming Leadership in Reading Network (LiRN) sessions. (See more details on registering for the workshops on page 14 of this newsletter).

- Planning fall activities. Look for more information to come about an informal workshop for our members and other interested teachers and leaders about the upcoming changes in policy, assessments, and instruction in our state.

— Debra Peterson, President

continued on page 3

... Reading Councils (cont'd)

continued from page 2

Southeast Reading Council (SERC) Update

With a brand new slate of officers, SERC is geared up to offer many exceptional opportunities to its members in the southeast region of the state! The new SERC officers include:

President.....Jean Boray
 VP/Membership ..Maurna Rome
 SecretaryMolly Ring
 TreasurerJill Magnuson
 At Large.....Jenny Dalsted
 Michele Pretzer
 Erica Try
 Heather Willman

Please visit the SERC Wiggio site http://wiggio.com/#tpl=posts_358340 for more information on the following events:

Cultivating Collaboration with Susan Marie Swanson (St. John's School, Lake City, MN)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2010

Morning Session: Teachers/Students from Grades 2-4: 9:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M.

Afternoon Session: Teachers/Students from Grades 5-8: 11:30 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

Registration LIMITED to 12 teacher/student teams per morning and afternoon session

Teachers are invited to bring one student to work with Minnesota author, Susan Marie Swanson, author of the Caldecott winning book *The House in the Night!*



Susan Marie Swanson

This half day workshop, made available through a generous grant from MRA, will feature poetry activities that will engage:

- the writing process, including exploring how our writing connects with our reading
- working with detail in meaningful ways
- creating metaphors to explore and describe ourselves and the world around us in new ways

Students and teachers will focus on creating letter poems as well as another interesting poetry idea.

Teachers will have a chance to observe Susan Marie's "hands-on" work with students, with the outcomes of the event designed especially for teachers. She will also provide handouts, time to address teachers' questions, and will share suggestions for teachers about how to integrate some of the material from the workshop into their instruction with their students.

A special aspect of the day will be that teachers will also get hands-on experience writing poems—and time for thinking about writing.

Susan Marie hopes "that teachers will come away with new ideas and understandings about why we might speak about writing as a process, about how reading and writing can be connected in our classroom activities, and how to use detail and metaphor in our writing to develop our thinking."

SERC members pay just \$10 to register! (includes breakfast/afternoon snacks, lunch, and the opportunity to purchase two autographed books by Susan Marie for just \$5 each!)

What Really Matters in RTI Book Club discussion

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2010
 WHISTLE BINKIES ON THE LAKE,
 ROCHESTER, MN)

Join us as we discuss Richard Allington's book.

Southwest Minnesota Reading Council

SWMRC Fall Conference

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2010
 SHETEK BEND, TRACY, MN

Beth Wolf, kindergarten teacher and member of the Executive Board will motivate you with ideas to use with literature in your classroom. She will present a variety of ways to extend the books and stories you are using in your classroom. Please join us as she shares her enthusiasm for reading with you!

For more information about this conference, please contact Jill Morgan at jamorg@hotmail.com. Please include the phrase SWMRC in the subject line.

Summer Workshop a Success!

The 11th Summer Reading Workshop sponsored by the Southwest Minnesota Reading Council was held on Thursday, June 10, 2010, at Prairie Elementary School in Worthington, MN. Dr. Cindy Whaley, Professor of Education at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, presented the workshop "Literacy Interventions Beyond RTI." Cindy talked about many interventions that can be used in a balanced language arts curriculum.

It was an enjoyable day of learning together! Dr. Whaley is president of the Southwest Minnesota Reading Council. We were very honored to have her share wonderful intervention ideas at this workshop. Fifty-eight teachers and paraprofessionals attended. Also, Scott Voss, vice-president of MRA, attended the workshop. We hope to sponsor another workshop in 2011.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Reflections on, and Hopes for, the MRA Annual Conference

by Jen McCarty Plucker,
MRA Vice-President
and 2011 Conference Chair



Aaron Doering, keynote speaker

Next Year!
August 11, 2011



Walking into Apple Valley High School for the 2010 MRA Annual Conference: *Engage and Envision*, I had a different lens than most. All I could think about was “I need to pay close attention, I need to absorb every detail, oh goodness ... I need to recreate this experience in exactly one year.” A comprehensive day of connections, inspiration, and evidence-based professional development showcased MRA President-elect Scott Voss’s leadership in continuing a tradition of conference excellence. As I listened to (eavesdropped on) participants, presenters, and professionals, I learned that passion exudes from the literacy community of Minnesota. People are so willing to share with, glean from, and support one another, all in the name of student achievement.

From the evaluations (thank you to the many of you who took the time to fill them out), our Minnesota Reading Association leadership learned that lunch was yummy, exhibits were filled with resources (and more time to browse them is necessary), and that many of our presenters were so outstanding that we need to invite them back again next year.

As chair for the 2011 MRA Annual conference, I am struck by the necessity of our organization to provide professional development,

support, and networking in our quest to meet the educational needs of our students here in Minnesota. I also challenge us to work even harder to reach out to our students. We must really listen to them, engage them, and involve them in their ongoing literacy growth.

Heading into this school year, please be thinking about what you can bring to the literacy community of Minnesota, which extends beyond our reading programs and into all of our disciplines. How might you get involved in next year’s conference? Email me if you’d like to be involved in the planning, marketing, and execution: J.Plucker@mnreading.org.

Watch our website for a call for proposals.

If you’ve presented before, come again. If you haven’t, consider the times your students experience accelerated growth in literacy, capture the techniques, save some student samples, record student voice, and/or invite them to join you next summer and come share your shining moments with us.

At a minimum, put the conference on your calendar, August 11, 2011, and invite your colleagues to join us. Watch future newsletters, eBuzz announcements, and the website for keynote speaker announcements and updates.



IRA News

IRA Feature of the Month

The International Reading Association provides a wide variety of services and resources to literacy professionals. Some are available to members only, providing great value for your membership dollar. Others are available to anyone on their useful website: www.reading.org.

One feature you may not know about is **IRA Radio**, which airs monthly on the BAM! Radio Network, a radio website for the education community. This service is free and meant to be shared in your school, district, and other professional groups. Be sure your local council knows about it!

In each installment, IRA interviews an expert or explores a key topic relating to reading education. The current installment is a look at Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Project, which provides one book each month to children from birth to their 5th birthday, at no charge to the child or family. Currently active in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, this program is directly affecting literacy for thousands of children.

Other topics in the IRA Radio archives include best practices in early literacy, closing the gender gap in reading, and culturally responsive instruction of reading.

The website provides helpful hints for listening on your computer. Have a listen, and share the resource with a colleague.

If you want to take advantage of all the resources available from IRA, consider joining. Easy to follow directions are available on the left-hand column of the IRA website under Membership. If you are mentoring a student or pre-service

teacher this year, IRA membership is an affordable gift that will support this new educator in countless ways. Please also encourage him/her to join MRA and a local council. All of us are stronger than any of us!

—Debbie Sauer
Arrowhead Reading Council
IRA Coordinator, Minnesota



Exemplary Reading Program Award

Does your school have an outstanding reading program? Are you seeing literacy growth in your students? Consider recognizing your school for an IRA Exemplary Reading Program Award.

This year Minnesota Reading Association will recognize schools or districts maintaining successful reading programs. Each school nominated will be recognized in a future newsletter, and the winning school or district will be recognized by International Reading Association as well.

The Exemplary Reading Program Award is sponsored by the International Reading Association to recognize outstanding reading and language arts programs at all grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school). Its purpose is to call the public's attention to outstanding programs in schools throughout North America. Each participating state is allowed to choose one winning school.

The program has five objectives:

1. to improve literacy in our society,
2. to recognize school staffs who demonstrate excellence in reading and literacy programs,
3. to encourage the development and refinement of exemplary reading/language arts programs,
4. to report to the public noteworthy efforts to improve reading/language arts, and
5. to disseminate specific information about high-quality programs so that other professionals can use it to improve their own instructional efforts.

Nominations for this award are due to MRA by November 1, 2010.

For more information on submission, visit www.mnreading.org or contact Julie Scullen at j.scullen@mnreading.org.



MRA Mission

The Minnesota Reading Association actively promotes lifelong literacy for all citizens. We encourage professional interaction among all organizations involved with literacy and provide resources for exemplary literacy practices and habits.

The Standards are coming!

*Let me be
the first
to introduce you ...*

*by Kari Ross,
Minnesota Department
of Education*

to the 2010 Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Okay, the title doesn't just roll off your tongue...if anyone has a great idea for an acronym, let me know! Don't let the title stop you...this is an exciting time in literacy education. The new standards are the great avenue to continue our quest for infusing current best practices into our English language arts classrooms, our reading programs, and our school-wide student achievement goals.

Beginning in July of 2009, the Minnesota Department of Education began convening focus groups of key Minnesota educators to provide professional input on the development of the Common Core Standards (CCS) as they were crafted at the national level. At every meeting, MRA leadership members contributed their wealth of experience, rich knowledge of literacy development, and collaborative spirit to provide thoughtful and specific feedback to the CCS design team. MRA members were steadfast and articulate about the needs of students and shared with great clarity how best to represent mastery of skills and knowledge in reading at each grade level.

MRA members truly represented our organization well. They went above and beyond the call of duty, providing true public service to Minnesota by attending these meetings on short notice and freely sharing expertise whenever called upon to do so. MRA's considerable contributions are directly linked to the final CCS product in English Language Arts.

Then, over the course of the summer, a committee of almost 30 educators (again, many of them were MRA members) met to add our state-specific standards to the CCS. These state specific standards consist of statutory requirements (such as including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian Tribes and integrating information technology), and best practices in reading and English language arts that were not already represented in the CCS document. The committee finished up their work in early August, and soon the final draft of the 2010 Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects will be available on the MDE website.

http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Academic_Excellence/Academic_Standards/index.html

So, you ask, what do I need to know about the new standards?

- The standards are formatted to view multiple grade levels at a time.
- Anchor Standards are mapped to college and career readiness standards K-12.
- There are four strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Viewing and Media Literacy, and Language.

- Reading sub-strands are included for Literature, Informational Text, and Foundational Skills.
- Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects is also included in the standards.
- Overall, there is a focus on rigorous reading, and new definitions of how we define text complexity and range of reading for students that go well beyond just readability levels.
- These standards must be implemented in the 2012-2013 school year, with the MCA-III Reading tests being administered in the Spring of 2013.

This is a great opportunity to advance literacy instruction in our schools, reexamine our instructional practices, and collaborate with our content area colleagues (particularly at the secondary level) to work together to prepare all kids for college and career readiness.

There is much more to know and discuss, so if you get a chance, I strongly encourage you to participate in the MRA Seasonal Symposium to be held October 2. At this event you will have the opportunity to discuss the possibilities and opportunities associated with implementing these standards. More information on this event is available in this newsletter and on the MRA website.

As always, please feel free to contact me with your questions and concerns about the standards, or other literacy education topics at kari.d.ross@state.mn.us or 651-582-8455.

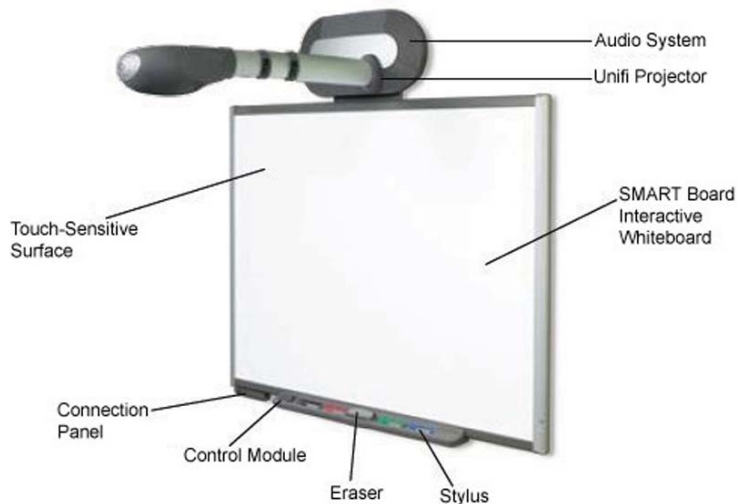
Work SMARTer, Not Harder

SMART Technology has the ability to help us meet our goals as educators by engaging all students while addressing various learning styles. With the help of the Internet, teachers can now conveniently find and adapt lessons that will captivate and stimulate their students. The hands on approach to learning can be addressed without spending hours planning.

Technology has become an integral part of our students' lives and therefore it is imperative that we continue to expand their knowledge while integrating it into our teaching. I was first introduced to SMART technology a year and a half ago. Our school was presented with an opportunity to use a SMART board, Notebook software, and document cameras.

I admit that at first I was skeptical because it sounded like something that would be great for older students, not my first graders. I have come to find out the boards are very durable, so using them with young students should not be a concern. The main thing your students need to learn is that any writing material cannot be used on the board. The surface of the board is similar in texture to a projector screen; therefore, traditional whiteboard makers, pens, pencils, etc., cannot be used. The students can use the provided markers or they can use an object to write that does not leave marks on the board such as tennis balls, pointers, or their fingers. The ability to write with different objects is just one of the ways these interactive boards are geared to students of all ages. The lessons that can be taught can also be geared to any age.

If you can navigate your work computer, you will be able to use a SMART board. The trickiest part is set-up, but TIES, a company that offers training courses on educational



technology, can often train and assist you on the process.

Once your computer, board, and projector are setup you can begin experimenting with different ways to use the technology.

- The interactive whiteboard can be used to navigate the Internet, which is beneficial in demonstrating lessons.
- Students can go to the board and click on the links or even type words by opening the keyboard.
- While on the Internet, or in other various computer programs, you can use a transparency function. This function allows you to write notes over the screen at which you are currently looking. The notes that you take can be saved for a later date or they can be printed off for students who were absent.
- I often use the transparency function with my first graders when we are looking for certain words, or words that contain a certain letter or vowel. The students can circle words in the displayed text and we can use those to guide our lesson.
- Along with navigating the Internet, and using the transparency

function, there are an abundance of lessons available online for various skills and various ages. One of the easiest sites to get you started is the SMART exchange found at <http://exchange.smarttech.com/>.

At this site you can connect with other teachers or you can look at already created lessons. At the exchange, you can specify which subject, grade level or lesson you wish to find.

- An additional feature worth mentioning is the document camera. It looks at an image and relays it to the screen. I often use this with writing. We can look at various students' work samples together, which allows for many whole-group teaching opportunities.

Overall, there are numerous ways in which you can integrate SMART technology into your classroom. The more comfortable you and your students become, the more regularly it will be used. You will be amazed by how engaged your students are and by how much they can teach you.

— Angela Tam
 First grade teacher
 Westview Elementary
 Apple Valley, Minnesota

A Better Way to Teach Spelling

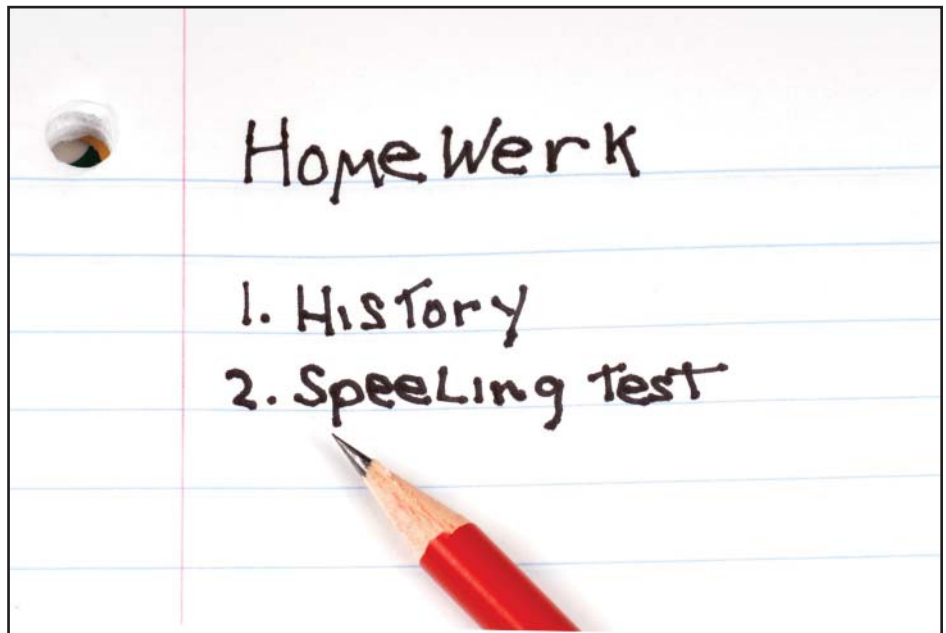
"It's a waste of time to teach spelling. My students memorize the words on the list but don't spell them correctly in their writing." When students memorize words they have a short-term goal in mind – the Friday test.

Learning to spell requires more than memorizing a list of words. And yet, spelling instruction hasn't changed much over the last hundred years. Our curriculum is too full to waste time on memorized lists. Teachers throughout the country express these same frustrations. And yet, we can't afford *not* to teach spelling.

Our students need to learn spelling patterns, meanings and word origins to help them in their writing and with decoding and comprehension in reading. Research tells us that when students write, they use words they feel comfortable spelling. It also tells us that even good spellers benefit from spelling instruction. So what do we teach?

Word study is the answer. How does word study differ from spelling? Word study teaches children to focus on patterns and meaning chunks. In a word study program children learn to apply their knowledge to a greater number of words than they could learn by memorizing traditional spelling lists.

A complete word study program includes lessons that require students to focus on a pattern. For example, students discuss their observations as they compare words with endings. Some have base words that need just the added ending while others require doubling of the final consonant before a suffix is added to the word. Under the teacher's guidance



students formulate a statement about the rule or pattern. Children then analyze and practice with a large number of words that follow the pattern.

Practice includes application and *word sorts*. Effective word sorts require more than copying the words from a list as seen in traditional spellers. Writing the word is not as important as the physical sorting. Students need to be able to manipulate the words. By placing the sort categories in the same place each time, the kinesthetic learner will remember where she placed the word when she thinks about the spelling of the word. The visual learner will remember in which column the word was placed.

Some sorts should require students to apply the rule as they sort rather than merely sorting words to which the rule has already been applied. Using the doubling rule as an example, the sort separates the word and ending, such as run + ing. Students are required to think about the rule

before placing the word in the "Double the Final Consonant" or "Don't Double" category. When the student finally records the sort, each word is written with the suffix added.

What about the student who needs a challenge? Leveled sorts on the same skill can be developed to meet the needs of the students. Using a website like Design 215 <http://www.design215.com/toolbox/wordfind.php> is helpful for creating lists as well as sorts of various levels. Sorts for those students needing a challenge will include words that will build their vocabulary. These students will be using the dictionary for attaining word meaning as well as sorting words.

Word study programs integrate dictionary study in the lessons. Dictionary basics will be introduced in the primary grades through games and activities meant to excite a love of words. At the higher levels, the use of the dictionary is fully integrated as students

continued on page 9

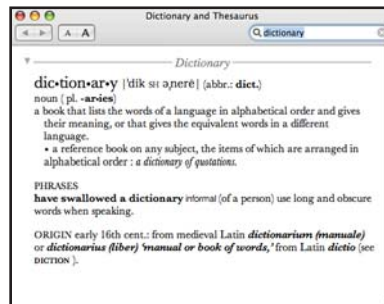
... A Better Way (cont'd)

continued from page 10

investigate meanings and connections between words. Students will learn how to read word origins through the study of word prefixes, roots, and suffixes from Greek, Latin, and other languages.

How can a word study program be tested without using a memorized list? Thinking outside the box, we give students all the parts they need to spell the word correctly. Students apply their knowledge of the pattern, rule, or meaning studied in the unit to complete the correct spelling.

“How can I hold students accountable for their learning? What about the misspelled words in their daily work?”



One way to hold students accountable throughout the year is to include practice exercises of previously learned skills with each unit. A section of the unit test can also be designated for review. Students realize that they can't simply say, "I don't need to remember those words any longer," when skills are constantly reviewed and tested.

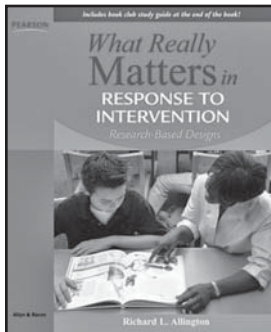
A link between word study and correct spelling in all work across the curriculum can be established by having students maintain a word study notebook. Primary students focus on and practice high frequency words. Intermediate students and more capable primary students build a personal list from words misspelled in daily work.

To learn more about an effective, research-based word study program go to www.spellingscholar.com.

— Eileen Mattmann
Rosanne Cowan
The Spelling Scholar

Mind- and Career-Expanding Opportunities

MRA Book Club



What Really Matters in Response to Intervention: Research Based Designs by Richard L. Allington

This year's first statewide MRA book club discussion will focus on the book *What Really Matters in Response to Intervention* by Richard Allington.

This book is a must-have for all teachers, administrators, and specialists who work with struggling readers. In his book, Allington starts by giving the

definition and history of RTI. He discusses factors that inhibit many of our struggling readers from making gains in reading. The book gives teachers ideas about how to include research-based instructional strategies into daily instruction.

Allington includes ideas on how to match readers to text, expand reading activity, create small groups for intervention, and how to coordinate interventions within the core curriculum.

What Really Matters in Response to Intervention includes a rubric for evaluating Reading Intervention Designs as well as a study guide for promoting thoughtful response and discussion.

Join us for discussion on this informative professional book! Check the MRA website for dates and locations for local council book club events!

— Sarah Rutledge

Leadership in Reading Network: Powerful Opportunity to Connect

Again this year, the MN Reading Association and the MN Department of Education will be partnering to offer a network and professional development for literacy leaders in Minnesota. Space is limited so we encourage you to register right away to hold your spot. This year we are offering an opportunity for all LiRN members to bring an administrator (for free) on Friday, October 8th, a content area teacher (for free) on Tuesday, December 7th, and a new teacher (for free) on Thursday, February 17th. See flyer on page 15 of this newsletter for more information. Visit our websites, www.mnreading.org or www.lirn.eventbrite.com for registration and details.

LiRN

Raising a Reader

Becoming a reader takes the child, the family (grandpas and grandmas too), the community, and faith communities. Working together, we can raise a reader. It begins the day each child is born. It ends when they graduate.

Research at Kansas University (*Meaningful Differences* by Risley and Hart, 1995) showed that children who have been read to, sung to, played with, and interacted with from the time they are born come to school ready to learn to read. Those who have not had these experiences have missed hearing 13,000,000 words (Trelease). We cannot make up for those 13 million words in kindergarten or first grade.



We need to go to our community and faith communities for some help. Mercy Hospital, Coon Rapids, MN is in my community. A simple pamphlet is sent home with new parents, sharing the research on the importance of reading to children. Fifty years ago new mothers were in the hospital for 5 days. Today they go home in 12 to 24 hours. Fifty years ago everyone had a baby class before they left the hospital. Today at Mercy, obstetric nurses teach the importance of reading to babies in a “discharge” conference.

At Zion Lutheran in Anoka, they hold a baby class for all the

children who will be baptized. The pastor talks about the faith aspect of the event, an office worker tells them the logistics, an obstetric nurse teaches them baby massage and health practices, and a reading teacher shares the research about why reading to and interacting with the new baby are so important. Eight new baby books are given to each baby. If you would like to observe this program in action, please call Sue at 763-427-1804.

The pediatric unit at Mercy Hospital is also giving out a pamphlet that shares information about reading easy books to improve a child’s reading level. Nurses

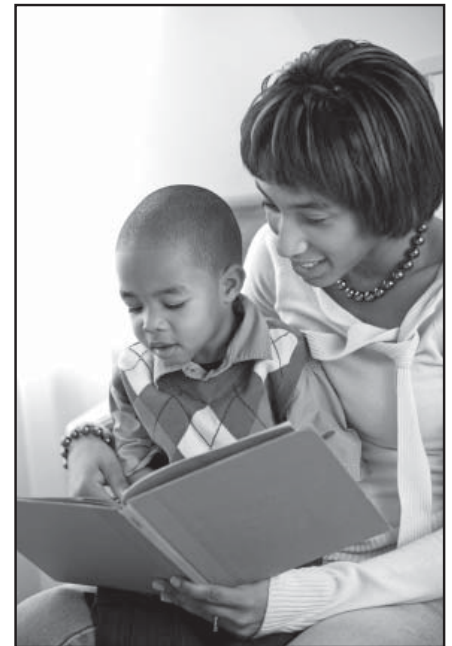
have been instructed in this. It gives the patient something to do while they are in the hospital and improves their reading at the same time.

When I was teaching remedial reading in a middle school, the first thing I did was check the phonics skills of each student. I quickly learned that many of my poor readers had problems in

phonics. Phonics is the “machinery” for the brain. No food – no phonics. Survival then becomes memorization of the words. Our students can memorize a lot! (10% of high school students need phonics. *Reading Next*) Norann Lafon now has a program available for every grade level. phonsol@ties2.net

Fluency instruction is essential for growth

Practice should be at the student’s independent reading level – or below. The faster the words go by the brain, the more growth for the child. The students, teacher,



and parents need to know the independent reading level of the student. The San Diego assessment of reading ability (look online) is quick and can be done in the hall, if necessary.

Years ago I read the research from Accelerated Reader. Reading one hour a day, five times a week, all year, at your independent reading level or below, will give you a gain of at least two grade levels a year. I always required that, for an A, they had to gain two grade levels. It worked, and we used it with our entire middle school of 1,600 students.

Find the student’s independent reading level

Daryl Seifert shared a formula for finding the student’s independent reading level. The students give the book a test!

- K-2: Count out 50 words – place a Post-It® Note there – read to the Post-It® Note, count your mistakes. If you have only two, it is fine.

continued on page 11

... Raising a Reader (cont'd)

continued from page 10

- 3rd and above: Count out 100 words – place a Post-It® Note there – read to the Post-It® Note, count your mistakes. If you have only three, it is fine.

And...do not forget the parents in this endeavor. Ask them to donate old books or look for good used children's books at garage sales and bring them to school. Place them in your classroom.

Please email me at the address below if you are interested in any of these booklists for parents and students: wordless books, books with musical possibilities, books for boys (by boys), or books in a series.

Summer reading should be rewarded!!

Studies show that when a student reads as few as six appropriately grade-leveled books (independent reading level) during vacation, he or she is likely to fend off summer reading loss and maintain the reading gains made during the previous school year. When a child reads even more, 8 or 10 or 12, s/he may gain even more ground. (McGill-Franzen & Allington/ Scholastic's *Instructor*, M/J 2003)

Is your textbook written at your grade level?

Here is a quick way to check:

- Type in 600 words from the front of the book on your computer.
- Type in 600 words from the middle of the book.
- Type in 600 words from the end of the book.
- In Microsoft Word, go to "Spelling and Grammar > Flesch-Kincaid" Reading Level.
- You might be surprised and find it matches your reading level needs PERFECTLY!

I saved the best for last: Michael Pressley suggests (research shows) that using one strategy throughout an entire school will raise readers and test scores. Fred Moore Middle School (1600 students) used this – and it WORKED!

It was 1995 and we chose KWLN+. (The "+" was an activity that students participated in to use the KWLN ideas that had been presented.) In a monthly meeting held in the principal's office, we shared our ideas with each other. Ideas from each meeting were given to all the staff.



- In 1996 - 40% had passed
- In 1997 - 65% passed (the largest gain in the state of Minnesota)
- In 1998 - 74% passed
- In 1999 - 79% passed
- In 2000 - 84% passed
- In 2001 - 86% passed

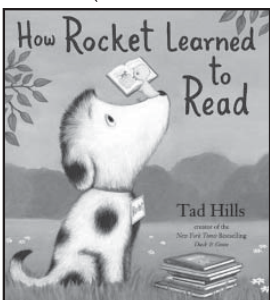
This speaks well for one school, one strategy.

Try some of these tips in your school planning ... we're all working together to Raise a Reader.

—Sue Klund
readezbooks@comcast.net

Quick Picks: two new picture books about reading

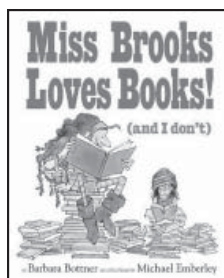
How Rocket Learned to Read by Tad Hills (Schwartz & Wade)



This sweet picture book starring an irresistible dog named Rocket and his teacher, a little yel-low bird, is

perfect for back-to-school! Follow along as Rocket masters the alphabet,

sounds out words, and finally ... learns to read all on his own. With a story that makes reading fun, this book is ideal for kindergarten classrooms and story hour.



Miss Brooks Loves Books (and I Don't) by Barbara Bottner and Michael Emberly (Knopf) With the help of Miss Brooks, Missy's classmates

all find books they love in the library – books about fairies and dogs and trains and cowboys. But Missy dis-misses them all – "Too flowery, too furry, too clickety, too yippity." Still, Miss Brooks remains undaunted. Book Week is here and Missy will find a book to love if they have to empty the library. What story will win over this beastly, er, discriminating child? William Steig's *Shrek!* – the tale of a repulsive green ogre in search of a revolting bride – of course!



Nominate a deserving literacy professional for the

Minnesota Reading Association **Celebrate Literacy Award**

Do you know an individual making an exceptional and inspiring contribution to K-12 literacy education in Minnesota? Recognize their efforts by nominating them for an MRA Celebrate Literacy Award. To be eligible, candidates must be MRA members working in K-12 literacy endeavors. Contributions of nominees must be significant and related to improving the reading process, reading instruction, or furthering literacy in Minnesota. Nominees should demonstrate exemplary service, practice, and accomplishments that provide a model of leadership for others.

For more details and to submit a nomination, visit the Minnesota Reading Association website at www.mnreading.org.

Nominations must be submitted by February 1, 2011.

**Please plan to join us
on Friday, March 11, 2011
for a celebration of all nominees and their work.**

Fall Symposium

Response to Intervention and the new MN Language Arts Standards



October 2, 2010

A continental breakfast and an afternoon snack will be provided; lunch will be on your own. CEUs will be provided to participants.

Each half-day session will begin with an overview, then participants will break into K-5 and 6-12 groups for focused sharing of information. Plan to spend some time networking with educators from other districts around the state.

Presenters will include specialists from the Minnesota Department of Education as well as literacy leaders from around the state.

Location:

Northdale Middle School
11301 Dogwood St. NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55448

Future MRA Symposia:

January 8, 2011
Legislative Advocacy
February 26, 2011
Content Area Literacy



Register through this link:
<http://fallsymposium2010.eventbrite.com>

Join us as we focus on two crucial topics facing Minnesota educators today: Response to Intervention and the 2010 K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts based on the Common Core Standards. Attend the morning session, the afternoon session, or choose to attend both.

October 2 Symposium Options

Response to Intervention	Unpacking the new MN Language Arts Standards	Both sessions, full day
8:00-11:00 am	12:00-3:00 pm	
\$40.00	\$40.00	\$65.00



Friday, October 8, 2010

BRING AN ADMINISTRATOR

Network members may bring an administrator at no additional charge. Sessions this day will focus on instructional leadership and building school-wide and district-wide capacity.

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Place: MDE

Tuesday, December 7, 2010

BRING A CONTENT AREA TEACHER

Network members may bring a content area colleague (math, science, social studies, music, art, etc) at no additional charge. Sessions this day will focus on meaningful reading in the content areas that support student growth and development.

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Place: MDE

Thursday, February 17, 2010

BRING A NEW TEACHER

Network members may bring a new teacher at no additional charge. Sessions this day will focus on building common understanding of instructional vocabulary and collegial discussions of student reading proficiency.

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Place: MDE

Cost:

MRA Members: \$265

Non - Members: \$295

Leadership in Reading Network 2010-2011



To register, visit

<http://lirn.eventbrite.com>

The Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Reading Association have partnered to offer a network for district-level and school-wide literacy leaders who support teachers and administrators in developing literacy programs based on research-based best practices. School-wide reading coaches, district literacy coordinators, administrators, AYP coordinators, and other MN educators with similar job descriptions are invited to join us for this collaborative initiative.

Formerly the Literacy Leadership Network, the initiative has now expanded to allow members to bring one guest to each event at no additional charge.

Network meetings are scheduled as three separate full day professional development events held at the Minnesota Department of Education and offered throughout the 2010-2011 school year.

As an added benefit, LiRN members will enjoy discounted registration to next year's MRA state-wide conference, to be held in August.





Minnesota Reading Association Presents

Join MRA as we invite Kao Kalia Yang to share her book, *The Latehomecomer*, and her unique perspective. Kalia frequently speaks with educators and students to share her experiences, and she achieves rave reviews. In her quiet way, Kalia provides insight into the lives and experiences of others, and her words speak in volumes.

Kao Kalia Yang author of *The Latehomecomer*



Born in a Thai refugee camp in 1980, Kao Kalia Yang immigrated to Minnesota when she was six. Together with her sister, she founded Words Wanted, a company dedicated to helping immigrants with writing, translating, and business services. A graduate of Carleton College and Columbia University, Yang has also recently completed a short film on the Hmong American refugee experience.

A limited number of copies of her memoir, *The Latehomecomer* will be available for purchase, and attendees will have an opportunity to have their copies signed by the author.

Light refreshments will be served.

**Thursday, October 7
6:00-8:00pm**

**Brookdale Library
6125 Shingle Creek Pkwy
Minneapolis, MN 55430**

Register on Eventbrite through this link:
<http://kaliayang.eventbrite.com/>

Cost: \$15.00