

MRA Highlights - Twin Cities Area Reading Council (TCARC) - January 1, 2016

Twin Cities Area Reading Council (TCARC): Agency and Independence in Literacies Jillian Maxe, EdD, TCARC President and Mary Green, MS, MA

The Twin Cities Area Reading Council (TCARC) Agency and Independence in Literacies' evening of learning was held at the Bloomington Public Schools Education Service Center on November 5, 2015, with national presenter Mary Green from the Lucy Calkin's Units of Study Team. Mary Green has worked as both a classroom teacher and a literacy specialist in a large urban district. She brings experience helping teachers and administrators create cultures of learning and norms of high expectations across schools to her role as a staff developer for the Reading and Writing Project with Lucy Calkins and colleagues from Teacher's College, Columbia University.

The TCARC November event highlighted the reading and writing connection of content area literacy. Ms. Green set the stage for the *Conditions for Learning* (Cambourne, 1995) and wove them into the writing instruction essentials. Participants experienced a workshop lesson that could be applied to their instruction the next day. The evening's presentation was a gradual release model displaying the integration of the reading and writing workshops based on the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP, 2014) work of Lucy Calkins and colleagues.

Ms. Green engaged participants in practices that are transferable to classroom settings. Examples include:

- Establishing rituals and routines for partnerships
- Speaking and listening norms
- Shared and interactive charting as a scaffold for taking notes and anchoring teaching
- A writing strategy for generating ideas

Mary Green connected the reading process to the writing process, stating that the Common Core Standards "place a tremendous emphasis on writing," with ten writing standards, along with two reading standards, numbers four and six. She specifically pointed out that standard six, craft and structure, requires us to read like writers, which further supports the significance of teaching writing as a subject. Mary also stated, "a strong writer is a strong reader," identifying that writers grow with instruction and the Workshop model is a predictable structure that provides opportunity for real writing. In the Workshop model, mini-lessons are held to 10-15 minutes, with plenty of independent work time for actual student writing. Table 1 displays the structure for the Writing Workshop.

Table 1: Writing Workshop Structure

Mini-lesson

Gather as a class

Sit with writing partners

Teacher needs to model

One teaching point

(10-15 minutes)

Independent Writing Time

Students write independently
Teacher is buzzing around and conferring with students
Table conferences
Determining who needs a strategy group
Partner conferences
Mid-workshop teaching points
(40 minutes)

Teaching Share

Closure – highlight and do a little extra teaching
(5 minutes)

During the participant independent work time of the presentation, Mary Green modeled how writers generate ideas out of small moments, choose one small moment, and write the wide story. She emphasized that the goal of a teacher is to make sure that students are generating ideas rather than completing an assignment on writing about one person. She noted that writing is expressive and something we can see immediately. Mary ended the evening by sharing a video clip, *It's a Beautiful Day, and I Can't See It* (Purple Feather Online Content Specialists, 2015), to emphasize the difference words can make and the power of shifting words. She also shared the following beneficial links: Vimeo Teachers College reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) at <https://vimeo.com/tcrwp/albums>, and Chartchums blog at <https://chartchums.wordpress.com/>.

Overall, it was a wonderful evening of learning with rave reviews. If you are interested in further information, you may contact Mary Green at: Mary@unitsofstudyteam.com or Jill Maxe at: jill.maxe@spps.org.

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References

Cambourne, Brian (1995). "Toward An Educationally Relevant Theory Of Literacy Learning: Twenty Years of Inquiry". *The Reading Teacher*, Vol. 49, No. 3.

Purple Feather Online Content Specialists (2015). *It's a beautiful day and I can't see it*. www.purplefeather.co.uk. Retrieved December 18, 2015 from <http://keepmarketingfun.com/2013/08/05/the-power-of-words-its-a-beautiful-day-and-i-cant-see-it/>

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) (2014). Retrieved on December 18, 2015 from <http://readingandwritingproject.org/>

