

# The Exchange

Winter 2017-18

Volume 29, Issue 2

A Newsletter of the Secondary Reading Interest Group of the  
International Literacy Association



## Message from the SRIG President Debra Franciosi

Today a box of SRIG archives arrived on my doorstep, and that got me thinking about the stew of topics encompassed by our work. Certain themes appear and reappear, even though Adolescent Literacy is a relative late-comer to the educational menu. I'm thankful for this recycling. Every time we revisit this particular stew, we season it a little differently; we add new voices, new cultures, and new perspectives to nuance the flavor for the times in which we live.

With another new year well underway, I'm pondering our summer Adolescent Literacy Institute topic – meaningful discussion – and thinking about my own students. There is no doubt it is currently a challenge to find intelligible discourse in mainstream media. It's there, certainly, in professional learning networks, academia, and in more enlightened households across the globe. Unfortunately, headlines remind us of our pressing need as literacy educators to raise the bar for thoughtful discussion and well-researched and articulated argumentation.

How do we break the addiction to delicious, competing media on adolescents' minds and attention and incorporate some nutritious, effective communication into their diets? In my classroom, we unplug. We read. We write. We work towards mindful listening. We take risks – because stumbling and recovering are tools of memory. We examine the world through literature and articles (and yes, connected technologies). We explore models of civility and insightful rhetoric. And we ask questions.

In some classrooms it may be different, but in my classroom full of middle school students, it's messy. The recipe isn't as easy as Hamburger Helper. The feast of adolescent literacy means the ingredients (discrete skills) are entwined with significant complexity. Our students' literacy learning isn't packaged in neat little boxes (or isolated standards). Everything merges in an educational soup with a healthy dose of culture and history to spice things up. The important thing, as we creatively construct the recipes of learning, is that we move forward even as the menu changes, day by day.

Whether you are sampling civil discourse, nibbling on sentence structures that guide readers through narrative, or digging deeply into informational text or vocabulary study, you are not alone. The Secondary Reading Interest Group has a proud history of gathering talented cooks into its kitchen. In this issue of *The Exchange*, whet your appetite for the annual conference in Austin with our 2018 Adolescent Thought Leader Nominees, learn about what some of our members are reading, and get a whiff of what we're offering at the Adolescent Literacy Institute with an article on Purposeful Conversation by Dr. Julie Meltzer.

As always, thank you for the challenging work you do every day!  
Peace to you and yours in 2018.

### In this Issue

- 1 **Message from the President**
- 2 **Adolescent Literacy Thought Leaders 2017**
- 3 **2018 Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Nominees**
- 5 **Activities and Resources**
- 5 **SRIG Business**
- 6 **Adolescent Literacy Reading Round-up**
- 7 **SRIG Officer Contact Info**
- 8 **Let's Talk About That! Purposeful Conversation**
- 10 **2017 Meeting Minutes**
- 11 **Membership Form**

## Adolescent Literacy Thought Leaders 2017



*Our exceptional 2017 Adolescent Thought Leaders for 2017: Dr. Judith Irvin (left) and Cris Tovani (right).*

Our SRIG Secretary, Kathy Galvin, shared these notes from their award presentations:

**Judith Irvin** shared key lessons learned from years of experience. Lessons included:

1. Welcome and seek feedback on your work.
2. Acknowledge the power of content knowledge.
3. It takes a whole village to improve literacy schoolwide.
4. Teachers are still the key!

Irvin closed by saying, “Teachers are the key—not computers or YouTube or Twitter. Teachers at every level are learning to open the door to reading proficiency for students. In a world of increasing uncertainty and incivility, teachers continue to make the connections young people need to enduring ideals, thoughts, discoveries, and creative endeavors. Teachers cajole, convince, and care. They offer the world of knowledge and understanding; in return they expect students to learn and put their learning to good practice. Content knowledge is the foundation. Responsible citizenship is the purpose. Schoolwide effort is the vehicle. Education is the key.”

**Cris Tovani** – “Keeping Kids from Quitting”

Tovani stressed the need for teachers to become skilled in creating powerful learning experiences that will increase students’ engagement and learning. Thoughtful use and consideration of planning and assessment structures engage students behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively. When all three types of engagement intersect, students have a greater drive to learn. Educators that know how to plan for engagement create students that want to read, write, and discuss important content. The model for generating student engagement shared during this session is a tool for educators to use in planning and assessment.

Components of the Student Engagement Model include:

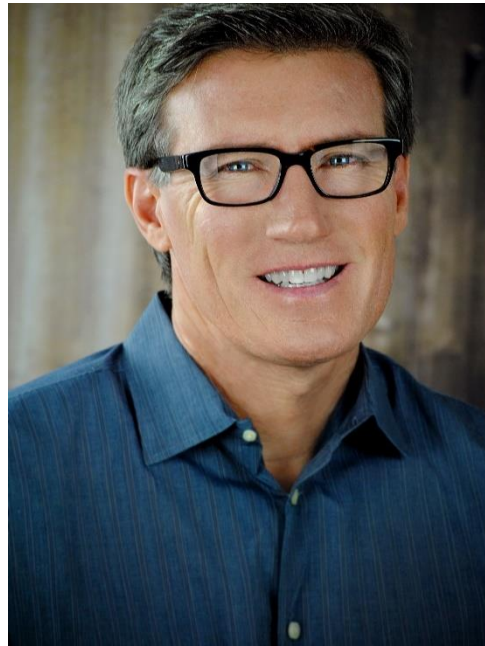
1. Opening,
2. Mini-lesson/micro lecture,
3. Working/thinking session,
4. Catch and release, and
5. Debriefing

Thank you, Cris and Judith, for providing your insights and taking lots of questions during our SRIG session!

## 2018 Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Nominees



Donna Alvermann is the University of Georgia Appointed Distinguished Research Professor of Language and Literacy Education. Formerly a classroom teacher for 12 years, Dr. Alvermann's current research focuses on young people's digital literacy practices and silent reading instruction, which she views as intricately linked to the type of reading adolescents accomplish online. Author of numerous articles in journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, *American Educational Research Journal*, *Reading Research & Instruction*, and the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, Alvermann was Co-Director of the National Reading Research Center from 1992-1997. Her co-authored/co-edited books include: *Adolescents and Literacies in a Digital World*; *Reconceptualizing the Literacies in Adolescents' Lives (3rd ed.)*; and *Adolescents' Online Literacies: Connecting Classrooms, Digital Media, & Popular Culture, rev. ed.*, and *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading (6th ed., with the 7th edition due out in 2018)*. Alvermann devotes innumerable hours toward teaching and mentoring master's and doctoral level students, new faculty, and practitioners in public and private K-12 schools. Policy makers at the state and federal level levels



Since 1985, Kelly Gallagher has devoted himself to the teaching of reading, writing, listening and speaking—first and foremost, as a high school ELA teacher at Magnolia High School in Anaheim, California, and also as an author/consultant who works with educators around the world. Today, he is considered one of the leading voices in literacy education.

Always in search of a better way, Kelly honed his craft by taking on leadership positions in several key literacy programs, including the California Reading and Literature Project, the South Basin Writing Project at California State University, Long Beach, and the Puente Project, a University of California outreach program that prepares under-represented high school students for transition into universities. For several years, he taught secondary literacy courses as an adjunct professor at California State University, Fullerton, and, most recently, he served as the president of the Secondary Reading Group of the International Reading Association (IRA).

Inspired by his classroom, mentors and professional development experiences, Kelly has written several books on adolescent literacy, most notably

*Continued on page 4*

have recognized the impact of her work by appointing her to various advisory panels and boards at the state, national, and international levels. In 2010, she was Named Mentor of the Year by the Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring. She was nominated for this award by one of her doctoral advisees who concurrently held a Doctoral Scholars Fellowship from the Southern Regional Education Board.

Aside from her professional life, Donna is beginning her third year of taking group lessons on acoustic guitar at Good Dirt Clay Studio under the able direction of two local musicians who are committed to helping even late-bloomers/beginners learn to play a stringed instrument. She's a novice for sure, but it keeps her humble when working with others who want to succeed in an academic career. She is also active in the Golden Retriever Club of Atlanta, and participates in local initiatives such as Athens for Everyone and the Athens Folk Music and Dance Society, which has produced the North Georgia Folk Festival for 33 years running.

Who do you think should be our next Adolescent Thought Leader award nominees? Use [this nomination form](#) on our website to share your thoughts!

*Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It* and *Write Like This*. Kelly's latest book, co-written with Penny Kittle, is *180 days: Two Teachers and the Quest to Engage and Empower Adolescents*.

In 2013-14, Kelly worked with the Harlem Village Academies (HVA) in New York City, where he taught a high school writing course and coached secondary teachers. As part of his affiliation with HVA, he became a founding faculty member for the Progressive Education Institute, a graduate school of education that aspires to become the premier institution for teacher preparation.

At least twice a month during the school year and throughout the summer months, Kelly travels to school districts and conferences around the world to share his thoughts and insights on literacy education and guide his colleagues toward more effective instruction. Despite his demanding schedule, Kelly remains a dedicated writer.

In 2005, Kelly received the Award for Classroom Excellence from the California Association of Teachers of English, the state's highest honor for English teachers.

Outside of his work with students and educators, Kelly loves watching baseball, playing with his dog, Scout, reading, hiking and spending time with his family.

Follow Kelly on Twitter @KellyGToGo and visit him at [www.kellygallagher.org](http://www.kellygallagher.org).

## Adolescent Thought Leader Awards

### 2015

Doug Buehl, Wisconsin  
Carol Jago, California  
Jeff Wilhelm, Idaho

### 2016

Douglas Fisher, California  
Nancy Frey, California

### 2017

Judith Irwin, Florida  
Cris Tovani, Colorado

## Activities and Resources

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Adolescent Literacy Summit** will be April 11-12, 2019 in Winnipeg, Alberta, Canada. Nancy Frey and Doug Fisher will present, along with award-winning author, David A. Robertson. More information will be available in 2018 on Twitter @mb\_mra and at <http://www.readingmanitoba.org>.

**The National Literacy Project**, led by Dr. Judith Irvin (a 2017 Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader!), published a collection of modules with civics content for grades K-6. Please share with your colleagues! Go to <https://coretools ldc.org/curriculumLibrary> and search for NLP Civics Collection.

**Literacy Lines**, a collection of blog posts focused on adolescent literacy, are now available at <https://keystoliteracy.com/blog/category/adolescent-literacy/>. The posts provide information and resources on a variety of adolescent literacy topics.

**Project CRISS** has a collection of useful blog posts that span elements of literacy instruction and metacognition. Check it out here: <http://www.projectcriss.com/blog>.

**If you're working on an interesting project with students, student-teachers, teachers, or other adolescent literacy professionals, we would love to hear from you!**

Send information about your activities in adolescent literacy to [dfranciosi@projectcriss.com](mailto:dfranciosi@projectcriss.com).



### SRIG Business

*An email went out to current and past members in an attempt to update and clean the list. The content of that email is included here.*

Thanks for your patience while we figured out how to set up a PayPal account, reconfigured SRIG webpage, and changed bank accounts. This is a transition year. We expect that ILA will be making changes that will allow co-registration in Interest Groups and Affiliates when people join or renew but that is still a year or so off in the future. In the meantime,

- IF you did renew at the SRIG session, you are all set. We have your info and we know you are paid up! Thank you!
- IF you did NOT renew at the SRIG session, and would like to renew, please go to the [SRIG website](#) and complete the form so our membership records are accurate. Please use PayPal or send a check as indicated. Thank you!
- IF you want to JOIN, please go to [our website](#) and fill out the form and use PayPal or send a check as indicated. Thank you!

Dues keep things going! Expenses associated with a SRIG session or the website or to thank people for their service or to purchase the plaques for the Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Awards. At \$10/per year it is a bargain! You get to be part of a network of likeminded professionals, support the work of the SRIG and get all communication related to the SRIG, two newsletters, etc., plus access to resources, etc. Remember, you have to be an ILA member to be a member of the SRIG.

Please share information about ILA and the SRIG with adolescent literacy students and professionals you know, and encourage them to join. A membership form is included at the end of this issue of *The Exchange*.

# Adolescent Literacy Reading Round-up

We all know that the best way to find a good read is through a friend or colleague. We asked some past winners of the Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Award, past presidents, and current SRIG Board Members what they were reading these days. Here is what they said. Thanks to everyone who replied. Happy reading and exploring!

## From Jeff Wilhelm:

I am reading Ellen Langer's 25th Anniversary *Mindfulness*. I'm finding it has much to say about getting out of the rut, developing conscious competence, making active choices and creating new ways of being.

I recently read Damasio's *Self Comes to Mind* about how mind, self, identity and autobiographical consciousness have come to be. I found his discussion of how the mind developed to create maps that guide behavior resonant with Anders Ericsson's work on expert mental models.

## From Lori DiGisi:

I've been implementing *Disrupting Thinking* by Kylene Beers and Robert Probst.

It turns out that their questions lead to interesting discussions when students finish their independent reading books.

The YA book that touched me the strongest and has been passed from boy to boy in my middle school has been *Refugee* by Alan Gratz.

On my "plan to read" list is *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond as I continue to try to understand how to help students who live in circumstances I can barely imagine.

## From Kelly Gallagher:

I have just read Tom Newkirk's *Embarrassment*. It is a fascinating exploration of how embarrassment impedes learning and teaching. Highly recommended.

Up next: Maja Wilson's *Reimagining Writing Assessment*. I am a big fan of her *Rethinking Rubrics*, which changed the way I thought about assessing student writing. In this book, she extends that conversation.

## From Nancy Frey:

I recently finished Paul Tough's *Helping Children Succeed: What Works and Why* (2016). It's a terrific follow-up on his book *How Children Succeed* (2013). Both emphasize the critical importance of creating the conditions that allow children to develop the perseverance and grit that fuels learning. Tough reminds educators that learners don't acquire these skills simply by listening to others exhort them to "try harder." Rather, we need to set the stage such that students regularly confront challenge, face obstacles, and learn about themselves.

## From Julie Meltzer:

For teachers and literacy coaches looking for a practical way to get high level discussion happening in the middle and high school classroom, I highly recommend *The Best Class You Never Taught* by Alexa Wiggins. Wiggins provides explicit steps toward empowering and supporting students to engage in meaningful inclusive student-led Spider Web discussions.

Colleagues and I have been reading *The Impact Cycle: What Instructional Coaches Should Do to Foster Powerful Improvements in Teaching* by Jim Knight. The focus is on dialogic coaching, which is on a continuum between coaching to implement a specific program or approach and completely agnostic coaching, which only focuses

on process and requires no content expertise on the part of the coach. Framing coaching in this way is professionally respectful and supports deep, careful, context-based work. Our coaches and teachers who are trying to implement this model are very pleased with both process and impact so far.

### **From Terry McHugh**

Because I am involved in planning and preparing for an end-of-year administrator’s workshop on developing a common vision of effective literacy-based instruction, I am revisiting a number of “essential” texts in our field. Two that are once again reinvigorating my thinking and providing guidance for system wide impact on adolescent learning are *Taking Action on Adolescent Literacy* (Irvin, Meltzer and Dukes, ASCD, 2007) and *Uncommon Core* (Smith, Appleman, and Wilhelm, Corwin, 2014).

*Taking Action on Adolescent Literacy* has provided me a useful outline for using literacy as a focal point of moving overall school improvement. Of particular interest during my planning and preparation work are the chapters on supporting teachers as they work to improve instruction (Chapter 6) and building instructional leadership capacity (Chapter 8). These are two areas that my district has targeted as areas of need as we continue our work.

The first time I read *Uncommon Core*, the lens I applied provided a critical analysis of the instructional demands accompanying implementation of the Common Core standards. As such, *Uncommon Core* delivered with a strong argument against some of the dangerous misunderstandings that rose out of the CCSS implementation debate. This time around, my needs are different, and I have approached *Uncommon Core* seeking to glean insights into effective literacy-based instruction. To that end, *Uncommon Core* provides both theory and practices which will support our instructional leaders’ development. Moreover, given the number of strategies, lesson ideas, unit exemplars, and activities in the book, our instructional leaders will have a broad range of resources and tools to help define and articulate an effective vision of literacy-based instruction.

## **Secondary Reading Interest Group Officers 2017-18**

### **President**

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### **Secretary**

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# Let's Talk About That! How Purposeful Conversation Improves Middle and High School Literacy and Learning Across Content Areas

Julie Meltzer

Productive classroom conversation promotes improved literacy and learning. We know that:

- Discussing text during and after reading promotes comprehension.
- Talking before or after writing can improve writing.
- Productive discussion during and after learning experiences of any type can deepen learning, helping students to process what they learned to promote transfer.
- Engaging classroom discussion provides opportunities to teach, model, and practice speaking and listening standards.

Teaching students how to respectfully have dialogue about content and about what they are reading promotes agency. Unfortunately, we much more often position students to be passive recipients of others' learning. This despite knowing that dialogue is critical to engagement with content, building a reading, writing and learning community, and fostering the making of connections that underlies deep learning.

I would go further. At the risk of sounding dramatic, ***I contend that the ability to engage in productive conversations may be critical to the future of our democracy.*** It is more important than ever to teach young people how to discuss ideas and to respectfully listen, question one another, and make connections – and to give them the time to practice these skills in the classroom. This makes it imperative to actively minimize the most prevalent classroom strategy in the middle and high school classroom, "telling as teaching," and to create effective structures and supports for students to engage in productive conversation. Often.

Teachers generally agree that dialogue about reading and learning can be beneficial, and that use of such approaches as Socratic Dialogue, Fishbowl Discussions, Reciprocal Teaching, Save the Last Word, Debate, and other literacy discussion protocols can be highly engaging and result in deeper learning. The research base for the effectiveness of discussion-based learning is strong. Fisher, Frey & Hattie (2016) claim in *Visible Learning for Literacy* that it is through reciprocal thinking (effect size .74) and classroom discussion (effect size .82) that students can move from surface to deeper literacy learning. Moje concludes, "Interactive problem based methods that offer students a reason to learn and help them construct knowledge from investigations, materials, texts and one another are at least equal to the learning that occurs in lecture-dominated classrooms and in many cases, offer a statistically significant advantage over lectures" (Tovani & Moje, 2017, p. 34). Irvin, Meltzer & Dukes (2007) emphasize a key strategy to engender student motivation, engagement and achievement: have students interact with text and with each other about text (p.41).

McCann (2014) discusses talk as an integral and essential aspect of developing arguments, providing research and student reflection, showing how talk helps shape and rehearse, resulting in stronger more cogent arguments when put into writing. Zweirs and Crawford (2011) cite numerous reasons for coaching students to engage in academic conversations in the classroom. These include critical thinking, vocabulary development, promoting different perspectives and empathy, skills for negotiating meaning, building content understandings and that "students develop and learn through talk" (p.5). (e.g., Gilmore, 2006; McCann, 2014; Tovani & Moje, 2017; Steineke, 2002).

Despite this, such approaches are not widely observed in classrooms. We believe that teachers may need to learn options for how to structure productive conversation in the classroom. Many teachers are concerned that even with a protocol, middle and high school students will not stay on topic or will not have quality discussion.



We feel that there is a need to connect the theory to examples and protocols that can help teachers coach students how to have successful conversations that deepen comprehension, develop arguments, and expand learning.

That is why the SRIG will be sponsoring the pre-conference Adolescent Literacy Institute on Friday July 20th in Austin, TX: **Let's Talk About That! How Purposeful Conversation Improves Middle and High School Literacy and Learning Across Content Areas**. Carol Jago will be the Institute host and Cris Tovani and Nancy Steineke will present interactive keynotes. There will be breakout sessions focused on useful strategies and examples of how to facilitate purposeful conversation in the middle and high school classroom. Plan to join us!

### Sources cited:

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Hattie, J. (2016) *Visible Learning for Literacy, Grades K-12: Implementing the Practices That Work Best to Accelerate Student Learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Gilmore, B. (2006) *Speaking volumes: How to get students discussing books – and much more*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Irvin., J., Meltzer, J., & Dukes, M. (2007) *Taking action on adolescent literacy: An implementation guide for school leaders*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

McCann, Thomas M. (2014) *Transforming Talk into Text: Argument Writing, Inquiry, and Discussion, Grades 6-12*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Steineke, N. (2002) *Reading and writing together: Collaborative literacy in action*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Tovani, C. & Moje, E. B. (2017) *No more telling as teaching: Less lecture, more engaged learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Zwiers, J. & Crawford, M. (2011) *Academic conversations: Classroom talk that fosters critical thinking and content understandings*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

**Join us at the International Literacy Association annual conference in Austin this July!**

Friday, July 20, 2018

**Preconference Institute 07: Let's Talk About That! Purposeful Conversation Improves Middle and High School Literacy and Learning Across Content Areas**

Speakers include:

**Nancy Steineke, Cris Tovani, Carol Jago, Julie Meltzer, Kathy Galvan, Terry McHugh, Debra Franciosi, and Kellie Smith**

**&**

Saturday, July 21, 2018

**The Secondary Reading Interest Group Session 0839: Changemakers in Action: Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Award Recipients Lead Us into the Future**

Speakers include:

**Donna Alvermann and Kelly Gallagher**

# Regular Meeting of the Secondary Reading Interest Group of the International Literacy Association

**Call to Order:** Debra Franciosi, President, convened the regular meeting of the SRIG on July 16, 2017 at 3:00 pm in Orlando, FL.

## Old Business

- Approval of Minutes from July 2016 meeting in Boston
- Communication
- Treasurer's Report
- Update on Name Change
  - Website:  
<http://adolescentliteracyinterestgroup.weebly.com>
  - Twitter: @adoleslit
  - Newsletter
  - Logo



## New Business

- Membership forms shared with audience
- Adolescent Literacy Thought Leaders Award Nomination Forms shared with audience
  - Criteria for the Adolescent Thought Leader Award
    - Thought Leadership
    - Significant continuing service and impact to the field of adolescent literacy
- Introductions of the 2016-2018 Officers
  - President: Debra Franciosi
  - President-elect: Terry McHugh
  - Secretary: Kathy Galvin
  - Treasurer/Membership Chair & Past President: Julie Meltzer
- Introduction of the 2017 Adolescent Literacy Thought Leaders Award recipients:  
Judith Irwin and Cris Tovani

## Close of Business

*SRIG Session – The two-hour session focused on the 2017 recipients of the Thought Leader in Adolescent Literacy Award: Judith Irvin and Cris Tovani (See synopses of their presentations on page 2).*

Drawing for Prizes

Adjournment: President Deb Franciosi adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Galvin, Secretary

## A Special Thank You!

The members of the Secondary Reading Interest Group give a word of special thanks to Bob Keller of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for sponsoring the SRIG High Tea prior to our annual meeting in Orlando. Bob and his staff held nothing back with this elegant social event. The tea was lovely and the social time with adolescent literacy greats such as Carol Jago, Cris Tovani, Judith Irvin, and Julie Meltzer was appreciated by everyone who attended!



## Secondary Reading Interest Group of the International Literacy Association

### Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

ILA Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send completed form with a check for \$10 made out to Secondary Reading Interest Group to Julie Meltzer, PO Box 151, Bass Harbor, ME 04653. Thanks!*