

The Exchange

Winter 2017 Volume 29, Issue 1

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



Message from the SRIG President Debra Franciosi

Happy 2017!

I know I'm not alone when I say it's amazing how fast time is flying. Everyone and everything seems to be buzzing frenetically, trying to get more done in less time, often to the detriment of our families, our students, and ourselves. It's not surprising that I've seen a number of Facebook and blog posts written to teachers, by teachers, reminding us to slow down and savor the little things (or we won't be able to handle the big things!). With the new calendar year, we make resolutions to improve our attitudes, our health, our partnerships, our lives. We seek change – the one thing that is always there and often confounds us. This year promises change for educators. With the new administration, we hear promises of cuts to the federal budget, a move away from Common Core, a move toward “school choice”, and we don't really know what is going to happen with the Every Student Succeeds Act. Thankfully, for all these unknowns, we literacy professionals know there are things we can be doing to prepare students for the world they will inherit. As this election demonstrated, critical thinking, deep analysis, and questioning are skills learners need to actively engage in civil discourse. Students need to read widely, from a range of genres, and deeply – in ways that allow not only comprehension, but synthesis of complex information. Our call (echoing over many years) for developing deep reading and analytical skills across disciplines is validated once again, as is our dedication to student experience with quality literature for its broad perspectives and lessons in empathy. As members of the Secondary Reading Interest Group, we have our work cut out for us – and I am thankful to be a part of such an important organization.

At our annual meeting in Boston this past July, we had the good fortune to hear from the recipients of the 2016 Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader award, Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher. Find more information about that in the pages of this issue of The Exchange.

For 2017, we have two nominees who are exceptional adolescent literacy professionals, who, for many of us charted a course for our professional practice. It is my great honor to (re)introduce to you Judith Irwin and Cris Tovani. In this issue, read their brief (but illustrious) biographies. In our spring/summer issue, they will provide us with a preview of their Adolescent Thought Leader presentations at the International Literacy Association Secondary Reading Interest Group session in Orlando, Florida this July. We hope you will join us in Florida!

SRIG President-elect, Terry McHugh, offers his thoughts on working as a literacy coach. Find this and other SRIG information in this issue. Have something you want to share? Contact me with your ideas for an article or blurb :-)

Thank you for the challenging work you do every day!

In this Issue

- 1... Message from the President
- 2... Adolescent Literacy Thought Leaders 2016
- 3... 2017 Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Nominees
- 4... SRIG Business
- 5... 2016 Meeting Minutes
- 6... Adolescent Literacy Activities
- 8... Reflections of a Literacy Coach
10. SRIG Membership Form

Adolescent Literacy Thought Leaders 2016



Photo (from left to right): Kathy Galvin, Julie Meltzer, Deb Franciosi, Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, and Terry McHugh)

Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey shared their thoughts on Improving Adolescent Literacy in Boston last July. Their presentation explored their research and personal experience, and centered on five major lessons learned: 1) Student-Teacher Relationships Matter, 2) Instruction needs to be engaging and relevant, 3) students need to read EVERY day, 4) Instructional routines should be transportable and transparent, and 5) Challenging expectations are appropriate for all learners. This link brings you to various resources posted by Fisher and Frey <https://fisherandfrey.com/resources/>. Read their latest books, including *Visible Learning* (2016; with John Hattie) for a deep exploration of these points.

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

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

Adolescent Thought Leader Awards

2015
Doug Buehl, Wisconsin
Carol Jago, California
Jeff Wilhelm, Idaho

2016
Douglas Fisher, California
Nancy Frey, California

2017 Nominees
Judith Irwin, Florida
Cris Tovani, Colorado

2017 Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Nominees



Cris Tovani taught first grade to seniors for 31 years. Her entire career has been spent trying to figure out the “knowing-doing” gap. Researchers tell teachers what they should be doing but actually doing it with 125+ students is a whole new ball game. Throughout her career, Cris has tried to take reading and writing research and apply it to all levels of learners. She loves sharing her success and failures with colleagues around the world so they too, can better serve students.

Cris most recently worked with secondary English language learners from a high poverty district in Colorado that was in its fourth year of turnaround. Currently, Cris is facilitating literacy labs in several different states to promote collaboration among colleagues. In addition, she has the pleasure of working with administrators to build their background knowledge on best practices so they are able to give teachers useful feedback about instruction.

Cris is a nationally known consultant focusing on issues of reading, content comprehension and assessment in secondary classrooms. Cris has been an adjunct professor and is the author of four books: *I Read it but I Don't Get It, Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? So, What do They Really Know?* And *No More Telling as Teaching: Less Lecture, More Engaged Learning*.



Judith L. Irvin is Professor Emerita at Florida State University where she served as a Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the College of Education. Dr. Irvin’s repertoire includes chairing the Research Committee for the National Middle School Association for six years and serving on the Commission on Adolescent Literacy of the International Reading Association. She has written and edited numerous books, chapters, and articles on adolescent literacy – most notably *Reading and the High School Student: Strategies to Enhance Literacy* (with Buehl and Klemp, 2007), *Strategies for Enhancing Literacy and Learning in Middle School Content Area Classrooms* (with Buehl and Radcliffe, 2007) and *Teaching Middle School Reading* (with Rycik, 2005). She spent eight years as an elementary and middle school social studies and reading teacher.

Dr. Irvin led a project funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York which resulted in three books: *Taking Action on Adolescent Literacy: An Implementation Guide for School Leaders* (with Meltzer & Dukes, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007), *Meeting the Challenge of Adolescent Literacy: Practical Ideas for Literacy Leaders* (with Meltzer, Mickler, Phillips, & Dean, International Reading Association, 2009), and *Taking the Lead on Adolescent Literacy: A Step-by-Step Guide*



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*.

for *Developing a Literacy Action Plan* (with Meltzer, Mickler, and Dean, Corwin Press).

Dr. Irvin currently serves as the Executive Director of the *National Literacy Project* (NLP), a non-profit organization dedicated to improving literacy. She and her team lead a project with 20 Florida school districts to develop nineteen *Literacy Design Collaborative* (LDC) modules that address all of the benchmarks in civics K-6. These literacy-rich modules will be field-tested in four school districts in Florida early in 2017 and ready for national dissemination in August 2017. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, this project builds on the work of the *Florida Academic Literacy Network* that connects Florida school districts through the use of LDC. After forty years in education, she is enjoying returning to her roots as an elementary and middle school social studies and reading teacher.

On the horizon for Dr. Irvin and for NLP is work with several elementary schools in Eastern Kentucky providing professional development and assisting with the implementation of a school-based literacy action plan. This work will be grounded in the process outlined in the *Taking the Lead in Adolescent Literacy* book for developing, implementing, and revising a literacy action plan. She is proud of the fact that her latest books are still relevant to positive school change in literacy and learning.

SRIG Officers

President

Debra Franciosi, Ed.D.
Dir., Empower Lifelong Learning, Project CRISS, MT
dfranciosi@projectcriss.com
(406)758-6440

President-Elect

Terry McHugh
Literacy Specialist, IL
tmchugh@dayofreading.org

Secretary

Kathy Galvin
Retired Literacy Goddess, WI
Kathy.i.galvin@gmail.com

Past President, Treasurer/Membership

Julie Meltzer, Ph.D.
Dir. of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction, ME
(207)288-5049
jmeltzer@mdirss.org

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

Call to Order: Julie Meltzer, President, convened the regular meeting of the SRIG on July 10, 2016 at 10:00am in Boston, Massachusetts.

Old Business

- Approval of Minutes from July 2015 meeting in St. Louis
- Treasurer's Report
- Recognition of Rita Noon for longtime service
- Update on Name Change

New Business

- Motion re: Membership THROUGH THE TRANSITION, SRIG Membership will be in effect from one annual ILA convention to the next ILA convention. Members can renew or will be billed that month and will be able to pay by check or online beginning in July 2016. Full dues (\$10) will be required from the convention to six months later. After that, membership is "free" until the next conference.
- Update on Communications:
 - Website: <http://www.secondaryreadinginterestgroup.com/>
 - Twitter: [@adoleslit](#)
 - Newsletter
 - Facebook
 - New Logo in Process
- Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Award Nomination forms shared with audience
 - Criteria for the Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Award include Thought leadership and Significant continuing service and impact to the field of Adolescent Literacy.
- Vote on slate of the 2016-2018 Officers:
 - President – Debra Franciosi
 - President Elect – Terry McHugh
 - Secretary – Kathy Galvin
 - Treasurer/Membership Chair – Julie Meltzer
 - Past President – Julie Meltzer
- Passing of the Gavel to New President
- Introduction of the 2016 Adolescent Literacy Thought Leader Award recipients: Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey

Close of Business

SRIG Session – The two hour session focused on the 2016 recipients of the Thought Leader in Adolescent Literacy Award: Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey. Resources available: www.fisherandfrey.com
"Improving Adolescent Literacy: What Have We Learned?"

Drawing for Prizes

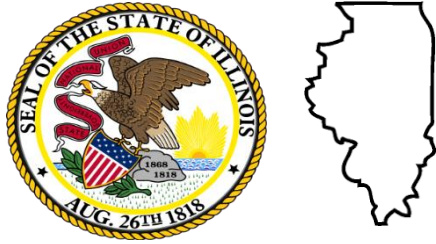
Adjournment: President Deb Franciosi adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Galvin, Secretary

Adolescent Literacy Activities

Sometimes, being an adolescent literacy professional can feel pretty lonely. The officers of the SRIG thought you might like to see what your colleagues are doing around the county.

In Illinois, as reported by Terry McHugh:



The Secondary Reading League (SRL) is a statewide council of the Illinois Reading Council. SRL's formal mission is to provide opportunities for the formal and informal exchange of ideas related to adolescent literacy. This is accomplished through networking at conferences, social media, and various other events that SRL offers throughout the year.

The premier event that the Secondary Reading League hosts is its annual Day of Reading Conference, which is held in November each year in Tinley Park, Illinois (just south of Chicago). The Day of Reading, affectionately known as DOR, includes a one-day Pre-conference Workshop, and a one-day Conference. What makes DOR unique is that all the sessions/topics focus exclusively on adolescent literacy. Whether spending a day learning with the most current thinkers in our field, or attending a conference with renowned keynoters, YA authors, and master practitioners, adolescent literacy issues take center stage.

This past November, SRL hosted the 40th Day of Reading Conference, featuring SRIG past-President Kelly Gallagher as its keynote presenter. Kelly's Pre-conference Workshop focused on methods to expand both the volume and quality of reading and writing in secondary classrooms. Past keynoters include SRIG Thought Leader Award winners Jeff Wilhelm, Carol Jago, and Doug Buehl, just to name a few.

Next year's Day of Reading Conference featuring Penny Kittle is tentatively scheduled for November 10-11, 2017. Find out more information at www.dayofreading.org

Other Secondary Reading League activities include sponsoring the adolescent literacy strand at the Illinois Reading Council Conference, hosting YA Book Talks, and various meetings and social networking opportunities throughout the year.

The Secondary Reading League is always looking for motivated educators, particularly from the Midwest, to participate and provide leadership in our field. Residing in Illinois is not a requirement for membership. Consider joining us!

Learn more about SRL and its efforts to advance adolescent literacy, including specific details regarding the 41st Day of Reading Conference, at www.dayofreading.org. You can also find SRL on Facebook, and via Twitter @SecondaryRead.

In Montana, as reported by Deb Franciosi:



This year, as in many other states, Montana will use the ACT to assess high school juniors. Under the direction of reading coach Rebekah Blood, the Two Eagle River school on the Flathead Indian Reservation is preparing students for the assessment by building literacy instruction to improve students' reading levels such that they can access the text in the test (lexile 1180). Bekah is looking to develop a project to support Native American and all other students and promote reading in all content areas K-12.

In Wisconsin, as reported by Kathy Galvin:



- The Wisconsin State Reading Association 2017 Convention this February includes several nationally acclaimed Adolescent Literacy experts who will share their expertise and knowledge. Follow this link to at the line-up of adolescent literacy experts featured at the 2017 WSRA Convention. <http://www.wsra.org/assets/Convention/bios%202017%20sept.pdf>
- The Cooperative Education Service Agencies (CESAs) located throughout the state offer professional development opportunities with adolescent literacy experts including: Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, Jeff Wilhelm, Sam Bennett, Kelly Gallagher, Penny Kittle, Chris Lehman, Gaye Ivey, and Pernille Ripp, among others.
- Donalyn Miller (*The Book Whisperer* and *Reading in the Wild*) brought her newest workshop, "Voice and Choice", to the Custom Education Solutions curriculum showroom in December for a workshop on the need for student choice, access, and time to read.
- This past year, teachers and administrators hailing from CESA 6 and CESA 1 districts began a two-year Reading Apprenticeship Across Disciplines professional learning experience. They entered their classrooms this past fall with new teaching routines, a deeper understanding of disciplinary literacy, and a strong learning community to turn to for support. The program runs through summer 2018. These teachers—and hundreds more from five other states—will participate in a variety of ongoing RAAD professional learning opportunities: face-to-

face institutes, monthly discipline-specific PLCs online, and school team meetings. Participating teachers will engage students in their classrooms with Reading Apprenticeship's unique textual and conversational routines utilizing the social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge building dimensions to tackle extensive reading in their subject areas.

Of general interest, as reported by Carol Jago:

For a rigorous, text-based task: Invite students to deconstruct and respond to Ta-Nehisi Coates' argument in *The Atlantic*, "My President Was Black: A history of the first African American White House – and what came next."

https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/01/my-president-was-black/508793/?utm_source=poltw

The instructional move that probably matters most is caring about students and their futures. That and a willingness to improvise. For more ideas about closing the achievement gap, check out Tyrone Howard's *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*.

https://www.amazon.com/Why-Race-Culture-Matter-Schools/dp/0807750719/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1481817924&sr=1-1&keywords=why+race+and+culture+matter+in+schools

New research demonstrates that increased funding improves education (not that you didn't know this already, but it's good to have numbers to support our beliefs).

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/12/nyregion/it-turns-out-spending-more-probably-does-improve-education.html?emc=edit_th_20161213&nl=todays-headlines&nlid=68687488

A recent meta-analysis by British researchers has brought renewed attention to the issue of the blue light emitted by electronic devices, calling increased use of mobile devices at bedtime a "major public-health concern" for children and teenagers.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/11/30/warning-sounded-on-tech-disrupting-student-sleep.html?cmp=eml-eb-popweek+12092016&M=57696637&U=952640000149867>

NEAToday interviews Matt de la Pena, author of Newbery Award winning picture book, *Last Stop on Market Street*. Matt explains how diverse books empower students

http://neatoday.org/2016/08/15/matt-de-la-pena/#.WFKNAur_BM0.twitter

NPR's Book Concierge offers a comprehensive listing of the best books of 2016. Great list!

http://apps.npr.org/best-books-2016/?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20161208&utm_campaign=&utm_term=&utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20161208&utm_campaign=&utm_term

We want to hear from you! What's happening in your state? Send a brief write-up of key events to Deb at dfranciosi@projectcriss.com.

Reflections of a Literacy Coach

Terry McHugh, Waukegan High School, IL, SRIG, President-elect

The number of school districts employing instructional coaches is growing as many districts recognize the value an instructional coaching program can bring to a district. By providing ongoing support, feedback, and focused literacy-based professional learning, instructional coaching offers a promising support to improve instructional practice.

The aim of coaching is to get individual teachers to reflect and improve on their theory and practice. By helping educators learn for themselves and from one another, coaching can boost their effectiveness, enhance student learning, deepen expertise, and improve staff relationships.

I am a literacy coach in a large urban school with approximately 300 teachers. In my work with teachers across all content areas, I view the coaching relationship as an opportunity to focus not just on instructional strategies and routines that advance reading skills, but also to integrate disciplinary literacy skills into content learning. As I reflect on nearly five years of coaching and dozens of sustained coaching relationships, patterns emerge as to the topics, conversations and instructional areas in which my colleagues and I have spent our time. While each coaching relationship is unique, three common areas of teacher interest stand out: how to identify and select high-quality text, how to support the reading and re-reading of text within the classroom setting, and how to utilize reading to promote student discussion and student writing.

Select brief, high-quality, complex text(s)

One area of particular interest to teachers is the identification and selection of high-quality text to supplement the existing curriculum materials. As the initial impetus for working with a literacy coach, identification of text resources leads to a natural conversation about learning goals, curricular objectives, and content considerations - all valuable conversations in the context of instructional coaching. It's through these conversations that we make the connection between content and disciplinary literacy skills. As I gained more experience in my role, I intentionally planned for discussion of goals, objectives, and content as part of the process of searching for primary and supplemental text to be used in a literacy-based lesson.

Working with teachers to select text appropriate for literacy-based lessons requires a broad familiarity with text resources that are available through both traditional and non-traditional avenues. For me, social media, especially Twitter, is a particularly rich source of compelling, high-interest text for nearly every discipline. Teachers value this basic level of support, as their exposure to the range of available text materials (or their time to search for them) may be limited.

As teachers prepare literacy-based lessons, I have found it is necessary to demonstrate the benefit of limiting the length of the passages during the instructional sequence: students have more time to apply new skills and strategies through multiple readings of the text.

Individual reading and re-reading of text

A second popular coaching conversation topic centers on techniques for individual reading and rereading of text. Simply put, the teachers I worked with wanted help with how to effectively teach reading of text.

Coming from an English Language Arts background, I appreciate the challenges my colleagues across disciplines face with content-area reading. Generic professional development approaches to close reading, absent specific consideration of individual curricular differences, only increased those challenges. When these teachers were faced with students unable to read the text independently, they frequently lacked instructional approaches to meet those students' needs. "I am not a reading teacher," was a comment I often heard in my pre-coaching days.

My experience has taught me that even if the district spent a considerable amount of time at providing workshops and inservices on "close reading," as my district has done, teachers still need support translating those broad ideas into specific plans for their own content and classroom. With this focus, I spent a significant amount of time modeling approaches to engage students in a partner or group read, as well as introducing and modeling instructional scaffolds (i.e. graphic organizers, note-making processes) to support students' individual reading of text. For instance, using a graphic organizer as an instructional scaffold for reading serves an entirely different purpose than having students simply fill out a graphic organizer as they read. Sometimes, teachers did not appreciate this subtle, yet important, distinction. Introducing examples of scaffolds affords the opportunity to reinforce a gradual release of responsibility and intentional consideration of when it is appropriate to remove the scaffolds being used.

Student discussion and student writing

Year after year, as teachers grow in their understanding of disciplinary literacy, I see a shift in the teacher-coach relationship. It evolves away from selecting and integrating text into lessons toward exploring the ideas within texts through discussion and writing. Teachers want their

students focused on analyzing and synthesizing concepts they find in texts.

Much of my work here focuses on helping teachers gain deep understanding of the text materials; I've learned to not assume that is present. Conducting close reads in advance of introducing the texts to students is a routine part of many coaching sessions. Our deep study of the texts allows us to identify particular passages that are key to the learning objectives.

For those instances in which I work with several teachers teaching a similar course, we develop banks of text-dependent questions for each reading as part of our planning. This work pays off very quickly. Simplistic recall questions are supplemented with or replaced by higher order questions that explore relationships between important concepts. Teachers learn to develop questions focused on the author's word choices, literary and rhetorical devices, and academic vocabulary.

With a bank of text dependent questions, teachers are equipped with a variety of prompts for both discussion and writing activities. After successfully implementing a discussion activity in one of her classes, a teacher remarked that she realized that it wasn't the discussion activity that was lacking, it was a set of focused questions with which to lead a fruitful discussion that made the difference. Several teachers shared that it was only through working within a coaching relationship that they grew to understand and better appreciate the role of the teacher in the discussion process. The teachers saw their involvement in discussion evolving from the role of "teacher as authority" to a role of facilitator and modeler of disciplinary thinking.

Many of the text-dependent questions we developed can be used in student writing. Teachers have students respond to these questions on exit slips and in journal entries, written reflections, and other quick-write activities. It's not that teachers weren't employing these sorts of activities previously, rather, these activities are now tied to the text and the course content in more meaningful ways.