

# Our Community FROM A TO Z

LITERACY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN ONE COMMUNITY

Welcome to Taliaferro County! We are a group of two elementary teachers (Melanie & Annie), two high school students (Latisha & Ja'Requs) and one university teacher educator (Amy) who met through a mutual commitment to understanding more about our community. We came together to create a community alphabet book, *C is for Crawfordville: The Faces and Places of Taliaferro County*. We intended for our inquiry to further our literacy teaching and learning. To guide our inquiry we used the A-Z format as a framework.

The site of our relationship is Taliaferro County School (TCS), a Pre-K to 12 public charter school in Crawfordville, Georgia with approximately 260 students. Taliaferro County has been marked as an area of persistent poverty and has few employment, educational, and health opportunities for the individuals who live there. TCS, the only school in the county, was founded in 2001 when the county ended an agreement to unify their school district with neighboring Greene County.

We see Taliaferro County as replete with resources that can better inform our teaching and learning of literacy. Working from a "funds of knowledge" perspective (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), we sought to identify the social, cultural, and historical resources that children enrolled in Taliaferro County School bring with them to school each day.

In this article, we discuss the theory on literacy teaching and learning that undergirded our intentions for creating this book. We then outline the process we followed and explain the impact that this book project has had on us. We draw on our diverse perspectives as

**Amy Suzanne Johnson**  
**Melanie Forehand**  
**Annie Chapman**  
**Latisha Andrews**  
and **Ja'Requs Randolph**

X is for ~~ex~~ Crawfordvillians

The most famous of whom is ~~Alex~~ Alexander Stephens.

1812 was when he was born

and in 1883 his death we mourned.

XX

Many famous people have spent time in Crawfordville. The most notable is Alexander H. Stephens, affectionately known as "Little Alec" and "The Great Commoner." We now call his home Liberty Hall. It is a state shrine and his final resting place. Born in a log cabin in the county in 1812, Mr. Stephens began his public career by serving six consecutive terms in the Georgia Legislature with distinction. He was elected to Congress in 1843 and served until 1859. When the South seceded from the North, Stephens was elected Vice-President of the newly formed Confederate government. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1866 but a seat was refused to him. He was elected again to Congress in 1873 and served until 1883, when he was elected Governor of Georgia. Stephens died in office on March 4, 1883.



XX

teachers, students, and a teacher educator, bringing multiple perspectives on what the ABC book has contributed to our understandings. We hope that our discussion is helpful to other teachers and students in Georgia who are eager to find out more about how their literacy teaching and learning are rooted in contexts and communities.

## Our Theoretical Perspectives

The questions we address to discuss our inquiry are:

- What funds of knowledge do individuals living in Taliaferro County, Georgia bring with them to school?
- How have we benefited from such inquiry into our community's funds of knowledge, as teachers and students of literacy?

To engage with these questions we consider individuals' experiences in their homes and communities as resources they bring to school with them each day. As individuals engage in literate practice, they draw on these resources to make and convey meanings. Specifically, the resources embedded within families and communities inform individuals' habits and dispositions and shape their taken-for-granted views of the world. Drawing on the work of Habermas (1984), we consider these to be "lifeworld resources"—the culturally grounded and informal understandings of the world that individuals bring with them to school each day. Lifeworld resources comprise

a person's "funds of knowledge," defined by Gonzales, Moll, and Amanti (2005) as "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 72). From the vantage point of funds of knowledge every community, as well as every household, has a unique history with distinctive cultural practices and resources "that can form the bases for an education that addresses broader social, academic and intellectual issues than simply [the] learning [of] basic, rudimentary skills" (Moll & Gonazales, 2001, p. 158).

Funds of knowledge asks teachers to "look beyond the school itself to understand local meanings and the impact of schooling" (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005, p. 40). Such a holistic perspective on learners has salience for teachers working with poor and minority students who have been historically "viewed with a lens of deficiencies [and as] substandard in their socialization practices, language practices, and orientation toward scholastic achievement" (Gonzalez, et al., 2005, p. 34). Identifying and honoring the lifeworld resources that comprise an individual's funds of knowledge can enable teachers in rural areas, particularly, to design literacy curriculum and instruction that is responsive to students' lifeworlds. In this way, funds of knowledge can help rural teachers understand how curricular knowledge may be constructed differently by each student, due to his/her unique cultural understandings of the world. Funds of knowledge may also help students living in rural communities come to identify and appreciate the cultural and historical significance of their local communities, seeing their communities as rich with opportunities for their own learning.

Despite the potential benefits of funds of knowledge, few educators have taken such a focus. Even less attention has been given to the funds of knowledge that children living in the rural south bring with them to school each day. In our desire to understand lifeworld resources available in Taliaferro County, we have come to understand that individuals bring personal databases of cultural knowledge with them to school that can be mobilized into their classroom learning. Yet identifying such cultural knowledge requires teachers and students to go beyond classroom walls and uncover resources for teaching embedded within the school's immediate community (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Through such efforts, rural teachers may come to deepen their knowledge of rural communities, making literacy curriculum and instruction more accessible and meaningful to their students.

### **The Context for our Work**

According to the U.S. Census (2000), Taliaferro County is an African-American majority county with 2,077 residents. Located in the area of the United States commonly known as the "Black Belt," Taliaferro County has experienced persistent intergenerational poverty linked to a history of cotton production, slavery, and sharecropping. Moreover, Crawfordville, because of its quintessential Southern charm, has been used as the setting for many motion pictures, including *Sweet Home Alabama* and *The Coward of the County*. In creating our ABC book of the community, we sought to tap into and elaborate upon this history, making it accessible to others in our community so that it might better inform literacy teaching and learning at Taliaferro County School.

### **Our Roles**

We came to this project from different backgrounds and experiences within Taliaferro County. These experiences helped shape our understandings of what was important and significant about the community. **LATISHA ANDREWS** is a junior at Taliaferro County School. She was born in 1982 in Washington, Georgia but has spent the majority of her life in Crawfordville, as her mother and grandmother are from Taliaferro County. All of her formal educational experiences have been in Taliaferro County. Latisha's health education teacher nominated her to work on the alphabet book project because she recognized Latisha as a strong student who would have a lot of local knowledge to offer to the project. Latisha plays drums for the Taliaferro County School marching band.

**ANNIE CHAPMAN** is a paraprofessional in the first grade at Taliaferro County School. She was born in the county in 1960, and has spent her entire life there. When Annie started attending school, Taliaferro County's schools were still racially segregated. As a young child, Annie was a firsthand witness to school desegregation efforts that took place within Taliaferro County. She graduated from high school in 1978, received her associate's degree from Athens Technical College in early childhood education in 1980, and has spent the past 28 years working in kindergarten or first grades in Taliaferro County. Annie is well known in the community for her delicious desserts, particularly her homemade ice cream. She joined the alphabet book research squad because she was interested in sharing with others the ways in which Crawfordville is special to her.

**MELANIE FOREHAND** is in her second year as a first grade teacher at Taliaferro County School. She moved to Taliaferro County (Raytown) as a young child, and

attended grades K-12 in Washington, Georgia. In 2001, she graduated from Washington-Wilkes High School, and in 2006 she graduated from Augusta State University with a degree in early childhood education. She is currently working on her M.Ed. in early childhood education at the University of Georgia. From her first day at college Melanie knew she would return to Crawfordville to teach. She grew up hearing stories about Crawfordville's history and recognized that being part of the alphabet book research squad would enable her to share these stories, and discover new stories, with others within the community. Her goal for participating was to share her learning with her students and members of the community who might not have heard about Crawfordville's rich history.

**AMY JOHNSON** is now a literacy teacher educator at the University of South Carolina, although at the time that the alphabet book research squad was created she was a faculty member in the early childhood program at the University of Georgia. She was born and educated in the Midwestern United States. She has taught in Baltimore and Milwaukee, and earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction in 2005 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She first came to Taliaferro County in December 2005, as part of a federally-funded Improving Teacher Quality Grant, committed to helping teachers explore how to use literacy as a tool for scientific inquiry. As a result of this experience, she recognized Crawfordville's historical richness and unique character. In May 2007, she and her colleague Deborah Tippins approached teachers at Taliaferro County School about doing a research project that would allow them to collaborate in learning more about the history of Crawfordville in order to inform school instruction.

**JA'REQUS RANDOLPH** is a senior at Taliaferro County School. He has lived in Taliaferro County his entire life, and has relatives who attend and work at Taliaferro County School. Ja'Requs is involved in many extra-curricular activities at the school, including Future Farmers of America and Jobs for Georgia. Like Latisha, his health education teacher nominated him to participate in this project because she believed his extensive knowledge of the local community would be beneficial to the alphabet book research squad.

### **Our Process for Creating the ABC Book**

Our first step was convening our group of inquirers. Amy, Melanie, and Annie were already acquainted through an earlier professional development project at TCS—one committed to using the community's funds of knowledge to inform science instruction at the school. The ABC book project was an offshoot of this earlier

work. For the ABC book, however, we wanted to collaborate with students so that we might learn with and from students at TCS about the community. We asked teachers to nominate high school students whom they felt would benefit from and work well on the project. In all, the teachers nominated four students of whom Latisha and Ja'Requs were two. We initially had four students participating, but one had a scheduling conflict that kept him from making group meetings, and the other transferred to another school.

Starting in May 2007, we met weekly. At our first meetings we explained the goals and purposes for our work together: we wanted to use the alphabet as a lens for organizing our knowledge about the community. We examined models of alphabet books, notably *P is for Palmetto* (Crane, 2002a), *P is for Peach* (Crane, 2002b), *Z is for Zamboni* (Napier, 2002), *Alphabet City* (Johnson, 1999), and *Pigs from A to Z* (Geisert, 1986). Looking across a wide range of styles for representing information alphabetically helped us identify the format we wanted to use in creating our alphabet book. As the reader can tell from the earlier examples, we decided our book should be enjoyable yet informational to readers. Thus, we decided to follow the format pursued by Carol Crane (2002 a,b) and Matthew Napier (2002), in which information is presented using both poetry and informational text.

Once we decided on our format, we generated an A-Z list of people, places, things, and practices associated with Taliaferro County, Georgia. With our brainstormed list, we divided up topics, working in flexible groups of 2 to 3 individuals to find out more about our self-selected topics. We interviewed individuals, visited local landmarks and the historical society, took photographs of the community, read archived newspaper and magazine articles, conducted internet research, and had informal conversations about Taliaferro County with any person who would let us. We took fieldnotes on our interactions with others and kept a file of the artifacts (e.g., photographs, newspaper articles, anecdotal records) collected for each letter of the alphabet. After we completed our research, we perused our A-Z files and selected topics for our book. The criteria we used for inclusion in the book were: (a) we had enough verifiable information on the topic, (b) we thought it would be of interest to others in our community, and (c) we felt that the concept was a central aspect of everyday life in Taliaferro County.

As a group, we wrote the text for our book, selecting to use a rhyming pattern that varied from page to page. We chose this method, rather than one consistent rhyme scheme because it allowed each page

to have a self-contained feel. Once we developed the rhymes, we used Powerpoint software to create and format the pages of our ABC book. We made sure that each page highlighted the letter of its focus and included background information on the topic. At the end of our book, we included an explanation of how we collected our data and sample fieldnotes. We also included pictures of historical markers in the county and other photographs we had taken that we saw as representative of our research.

At the end of this process, we came together to discuss how designing, researching, and creating the ABC book helped illuminate lifeworld resources of children and families at TCS. We noticed that children and families in Taliaferro County have a sense of interdependence to each other and a strong knowledge of history and their place in it. We see these two aspects of life comprising the funds of knowledge of the community.

### Lifeworld Resources

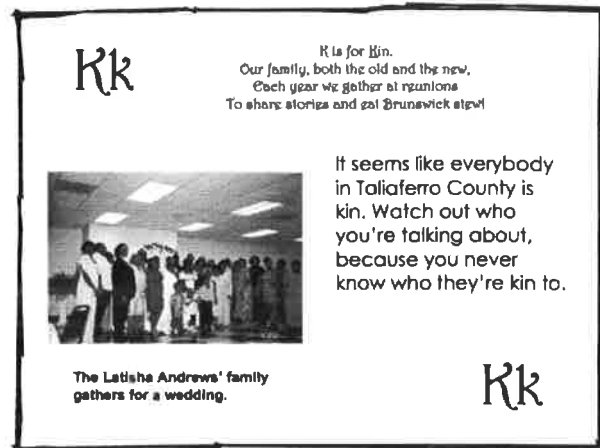
#### *Interdependence*

Friendship and kinship relationships were a persistent theme in our research. To capture this aspect of life in the county, we devoted an entire page to the topic "kin." On the "K is for Kin" page, we wrote: "It seems like everybody in Taliaferro County is kin. Watch out who you're talking about, because you never know who they're kin to." Kinship is a prominent part of life in Crawfordville, significantly informing teaching and learning at the school. In Annie Chapman and Melanie Forehand's first grade class, for instance, Annie is related to six of the twelve students. Even Melanie and Annie can identify a common link between their families, making them distant cousins!

When we interviewed residents about their lives, we noticed that many individuals mentioned the close-knit nature of community life. People not only described how they come together for church and community celebrations (i.e., homecoming, the annual Labor Day Fair), but also how their families share histories that have intersected for decades. For instance, one individual we interviewed, a paraprofessional at TCS, boasted that her grandmother and mother had raised the mayor's children and grandchildren, making them a part her family. We see the "close-knitness" that individuals' described as reflecting an interdependence that is an implicit part of life in Crawfordville.

Frequently, individuals to whom we spoke commented on how helping friends, neighbors, and kin were regular aspects of their lives. When someone in the community falls ill, others regularly pitch in to help out.

As Gonzales, Moll, and Amanti (2005) point out, the culture of the community depends on the exchange between neighbors and family: "Friends and kin often provide a safety net and substantial aid in time of crisis. Such exchanges occur in such a routine and constant fashion that people are hardly aware of them" (p. 58).



Such a sense of community can have profound implications for experiences at school. Teachers at TCS, and other schools, can draw on this sense of community when students experience crises in the classroom. Most importantly, this sense of community can inform literacy curriculum and instruction. Currently, the school uses a literacy curriculum that is directed and scripted, emphasizing "correctness" over "risk-taking." We see such a curriculum as reinforcing patterns of competition and emphasizing individuality, rather than cooperation and communalism. Interdependence, however, leads us to believe that teachers can make choices that better honor students' lifeworld experiences. In this way, teachers can help students learn literacy through their interactions with one another, making literacy learning a dynamic and dialogic process within the school and classroom.

#### *History*

To say that Crawfordville is rich in history is an understatement. From slavery to the Civil Rights Movement, it seems like Crawfordvillians have been at the scene of some of the major events of U.S. history. Alexander Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederacy, was born, raised, and died there. His home is now a museum named Liberty Hall and his property is now a state park named Alexander Stephens State Park.

On the "S is for Stephens State Park" page, we attempt to capture the significance of Liberty Hall to the community's past and present. Inside the museum

Civil War artifacts are on display, such as Stephens' Confederate Army uniform.

Besides being at the scene of distant history such as the U.S. Civil War, Crawfordvillians have also witnessed more recent historical events. In 1965, the county seat, Crawfordville, was in the national spotlight for Civil Rights' activities led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—voter registration drives, boycotts of downtown merchants, protests for school desegregation, and the integration of the pool at Stephens State Park. Due to violence and tensions surrounding these activities, Crawfordville's schools were closed that year, placed under federal receivership, and integration was forced. In October 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited the community in order to show his support for these efforts. More recently, Crawfordville's residents rallied together to successfully prevent a landfill from being developed in their county.

We represented this history in several places. For example, on the B page we described the efforts of Frank Bates, who as a high school student played a prominent role both in integrating the public pool at Stephens State Park as well as Crawfordville's public schools. We then presented Frank Bates alongside another Crawfordvillian who played a prominent role in the Civil Rights era, Annie Lou Bonner, the owner and operator of Bonner's Café. During the 1960s, Bonner's Café (now Liberty Café) had a public bus depot connected to it. To avoid having to integrate this public

space, Bonner petitioned for the café to receive private club status. In order to enter the café, individuals had to provide a membership card.

In this way, our portrayal of Frank Bates alongside Annie Lou Bonner represents the tensions and struggles present within the community during the Civil Rights era—Bates, the high school student working toward integration, and Bonner, the local merchant seeking to maintain the status quo.

When Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Crawfordville in October 1965, as a means for showing support for local integration efforts, he was required to eat his meal in the back room of the café. We represented this piece


of history on the "L is for Liberty Café" page. In the information box, we wrote: "Prior to the 1960s, the café was segregated with white people eating in the dining room and black people eating in the back where the food was cooked. Martin Luther King entered through the back door of the café when he visited Crawfordville in October of 1965."

Although all children in Taliaferro County might not be formally educated on the history of their community, this specific history accumulates in the children's social and cultural practices. As such, the events of history are a resource that children in Taliaferro County bring with them to school each day, informing their sense-making practices as readers and writers. In this way,

**Ss**

**S** is for Alexander H. Stephens State Park.  
Fishing lakes, campsites and paddle boats  
Can be found on its 1,177 acres.  
Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corp  
Were the original makers.


Just north of downtown Crawfordville stands Alexander H. Stephens State Park, named in honor of the famous Crawfordvillian and former vice-president of the Confederacy. The park grounds include Liberty Hall (Alexander H. Stephens' 1875 Victorian home) and the "old" school or the Alexander Stephens Institute. The Civilian Conservation Corp played a major role in developing the park as a part of the New Deal's efforts to fight poverty during the Great Depression. The 1,177 acres comprising the park includes hiking trails, tent and RV campsites, two fishing lakes and even a dog-friendly cottage (woof, woof!). During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's the park was desegregated.




**Ss**

**Bb**

**T**heo Brooks is for B  
He is a nut and he is so funny  
**F**rank Bates is for B, too.  
He helped integrate the pool.  
**B**onner is for B finally.  
Famous for its sweet potato pie,  
It sure was a good place to eat.



When he was a student at Murden High School, Frank Bates played an active role in the local Civil Rights Movement, helping to integrate the pool and Crawfordville's public schools.



Annie Lou Bonner opened Bonner's Café in 1923, when she was 17 years old. In that time, many famous individuals have eaten at Bonner's including, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Kenny Rogers. The café was famous for its sweet potato pie!

Each week, Theo Brooks entertains readers of the Advocate-Democrat with his stories about his life. Each column ends with his wish: "I hope y'all have a nice week."

**Bb**

historical events can inform curriculum and instruction at Taliaferro County School and other communities like it. Teachers can make purposeful choices about selecting reading texts that address this history. Teachers can also encourage students to investigate this history and prepare reports and other kinds of texts on how larger historical events take root in local places like Crawfordville.

### Reflection on Our Work

Although we see our investigation as posing general implications for all teachers and students at TCS, we have each (as teachers and students) individually gained from this project. At the completion of our project, we each wrote a reflection about what participation in creating a community ABC book meant to each of us. We looked at our reflections for common themes and patterns, identifying three themes that underlie our perspectives on this work: (a) being skeptical about researching Crawfordville, (b) realizing the significance of our community for our own teaching and learning, and (c) becoming a community of learners ourselves.

#### *Being Skeptical*

From the outset, we shared a sense of “skepticism” that we would uncover anything interesting to report about life in Crawfordville. For instance, Latisha wrote: “When I first heard about writing about Crawfordville I was amazed. I was thinking to myself why does somebody want to write about Crawfordville?”

Similarly, Annie confessed:

I thought that there was not much more that I could learn about our small town or about people from the past. So, when this project began I first said ‘No.’ Reluctantly, I started participating, feeling overwhelmed by the possibility of writing a book about Taliaferro County and feeling uncertain about what, if anything, we would find out. I am glad I participated, though, because I have come to learn things about our community (its past and present) that I did not know.

We had skepticism about researching Crawfordville, because it is such a small and isolated community. Oftentimes, individuals who live in a small community focus on what the community lacks. Such a perspective inhibits them from seeing the rich and plentiful resources that the community actually has to offer, not only to individuals who live there but to individuals from surrounding communities.

It is for Liberty Cafe,  
an eating place since 1923.  
Minnie Lou's sweet potato pie will make you sing.  
Everyone has had a piece.  
Even Martin Luther King!

It is for the Labor Day fair, too.  
The first Monday of each September,  
all the workers we remember.  
The streets are filled with girls & Crofta vendors.  
Its an annual event, so go ahead and be a big spender!

The area horse clubs  
are a favorite among  
the Labor Day  
Parade spectators.

#### *Recognizing Significance of Our Community*

Through engaging in this project and through uncovering tidbits of local history, we came to recognize the richness of life in Crawfordville and are no longer skeptical about why somebody would “want to write about Crawfordville.” Interviewing local community members, reading archived copies of the local newspaper *The Democrat-Advocate*, and visiting local historical sites and places of commerce helped us recognize that researching Crawfordville was an honor and a privilege.

Ja'Requs, who fine-tuned his interest in local history, pointed out that as we began to recognize the richness of Crawfordville's history, we saw how chronicling Crawfordville's local history was indeed a “great task.

It was a great honor as a student to have the opportunity to research and understand more about my great community. I not only enjoyed working and researching about my community, but it was a pleasure to work with a team to accomplish such a great task.”

Melanie also realized that learning about Crawfordville's local history had a profound impact on her teaching:

The project has impacted my teaching by allowing me to be more informed about our surrounding community and better prepared to deliver that information to my students. The end result of my learning is a tangible collection of people, places, ideas, traditions and customs that I can use as a tool to demonstrate to my students that they live in a wonderful place that can teach countless lessons.

As a teacher educator, Amy believed that learning more about Crawfordville's rich history helped her

understand literacy teaching and learning as embedded within the history of a place. The students at Taliaferro County School embody this history and use it to make sense of written and oral texts they encounter both within and beyond school. Amy wrote:

If I had not participated in this project, I don't think I would have come to fully grasp the significance that history plays on how children learn and use literacy. Crawfordville has been the site for so many historical dramas: the history of this place has accumulated and informs how the children go about making sense of their worlds and the printed texts they encounter. As a teacher educator, I see myself using the alphabet book as an example of how teachers can use local history and traditions as points of entry into literate practice.

What is significant about these reflections is how doing local research had such different impacts on us depending on our roles. For Ja'Requs and Latisha recognizing the richness of Crawfordville's history was a source of pride, for Melanie and Annie the community's history was an invaluable pedagogical tool and something they felt responsible for sharing with others, and for Amy the community's history helped her learn more about the historical nature of literacy learning.

#### *Becoming a Community of Learners*

Perhaps the most personally profound aspect of collaborating on the alphabet book was that as a research squad we became a "community of learners" who were not only co-researchers but also friends. As we worked to research, write text, take photographs, and format our findings, we bonded with each other. This is significant because we each come from such different backgrounds and perspectives. These different backgrounds and perspectives added a layer to our work where we each moved fluidly between the role of "expert" and "novice" depending on the task before us.

As a "novice" about life within the community, Amy would regularly ask clarifying questions which prompted us to explain aspects of community life that we often take for granted. As "experts" on the community, Latisha, Annie, Melanie, and Ja'Requs were able to act as "teachers" to Amy, the "expert with the PhD." In this way, we were each positioned as having different areas of expertise, and we drew on these different repertoires of expertise throughout the process. Being from the "technology generation," the "students" (Latisha and Ja'Requs) showed the "teachers" (Amy, Annie, and Melanie) different means

for formatting the text, using Powerpoint. As "teachers," Amy, Annie, and Melanie worked with the students to edit and proofread the text, minimizing grammatical errors and exploring different elements of writer's craft.

In one instance, we wanted to use a photograph from a source which required copyright permission. Amy used her research experience to demonstrate for Ja'Requs and Latisha how an author obtains copyright permission. In another case, we visited a local dairy farm to find out more about dairy farming practices within the county. Having grown up working for her father's dairy farm, Annie demonstrated to the others her knowledge of dairy farming. These are just a few of the ways that we moved back and forth between expert and novice in our work. But in creating a community of learners, we simulated a model for how teaching and learning could take place within classrooms – that is, classrooms could be spaces where teachers and students move fluidly into and out of the identities of "expert" and "novice."

#### **Conclusion**

While we created an ABC book about Crawfordville, Georgia, there are numerous ways that students and teachers in other communities can discover the community's funds of knowledge on their own. For instance, as Johnson, Baker, and Bruer (2007) illustrate, teachers can interview the children in their classrooms, asking them to draw pictures or write stories about important places in their communities. Teachers can send home interest surveys with students to find out more about student and family interests. Teachers can also send home a "time and talents" survey, where they survey parents on times they have available for helping out in the classroom but also on their specific talents and abilities. Students can conduct oral history interviews with community members, uncovering elements of local history that may help them understand broader historical movements and trends.

In terms of more practical classroom applications, we see the community alphabet book as being a means that teachers and students can come together to use literacy as a tool for inquiry into local history. As a class, students and teachers can generate an A-Z list about the people, places, things, and practices that they witness in their communities. Then, working in small groups students can research these local topics, taking photographs and interviewing community members as needed. Composing the text can offer opportunities for teachers to conduct minilessons on the craft of narrative and informational forms of writing. Through minilessons, teachers can also explore conventions for writing.

Formatting the alphabet book is also rich with practical implications. We used Powerpoint software to format the pages of our book because of ease of use and access. Teachers can invite students to format their alphabet book pages using Powerpoint or collaborate with the technology teacher to explore other technology programs that the school has available. The alphabet book is one way that teachers can offer students more authentic experiences for using literacy that helps students connect with their local communities, but also helps teachers identify community and lifeworld resources of their students.

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## CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

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The Georgia Journal of Reading is published twice yearly in Spring and Fall. The Journal is a refereed journal with national representation on the editorial board and is published by the Georgia Reading Association. We are seeking manuscripts concerning the improvement of reading and language arts instruction at all levels of education.

Manuscripts should be double-spaced and the format should conform to the guidelines presented in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Ed.). The author's name, full address, email address, affiliation, and a brief statement about professional experience should be submitted on a cover sheet. Three copies of the manuscript should be included. All submitted articles undergo blind review by multiple reviewers.

Authors are to process manuscripts in Microsoft Word. If a manuscript is accepted for publication, authors will be expected to send an electronic copy to the editor after revisions are made. Three types of manuscripts are being solicited.

### Full-length Articles

These articles should deal with research, current issues, and recent trends in reading or literacy programs. Appropriate topics for the Journal include project descriptions, research reports, theoretical papers and issues in reading education at the local, state, or national level. Preference is given to articles focusing on topics that impact Georgia's students.

### Articles for the Exchange Column

Articles for this column should describe creative teaching

ideas and strategies that can be implemented in the classroom. These articles are shorter than full-length articles and may or may not require references. If references are needed, they should conform to APA format mentioned above.

### Book and Resource Reviews

Reviews should describe and critique children's books, professional books, or reading resources (such as software, assessment tools, etc.) that are appropriate for use by teachers and reading professionals. Complete bibliographic information, the address of the publisher, and the cost of the materials (resources) should be included.

### Photographs

Do you have photos that illustrate the use of innovative literacy practices in your classroom? How about important literacy events—a child reading a book for the first time, a family member sharing a favorite book from childhood at storytime, an adolescent reader lounging in a special spot engrossed in a book? Please share them with others by submitting them for possible publication. High-quality resolution and pleasing composition are expected in submissions. If selected, you will be asked to submit the photos electronically and to provide a signed release form for anyone appearing in the photos.

### Submit Manuscripts and Photos to:

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