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The President's Message

Alita Anderson

Recently, I had an opportunity to observe a second grade classroom. A boy was sitting quietly, copying from a grammar book. The pencil stub he was using barely enabled him to print and he used only capital letters. He struggled to copy every word. A young classmate entered the classroom, sat beside him, and without saying a word erased a line from his paper. The boy said nothing, yet understood that his work was incorrect. He began to copy again, seemingly even more determined to make the short lead in the pencil work harder.

I wanted to help but did nothing because I had already given my sharpened pencil to another child in a different classroom. My helplessness was also due to the observation protocol. Leaving the room, the boy's determination to work hard pushed me to revisit why I have done this "life" work for over thirty years.

Educators are in the mist of change, seen and unseen. In the district where I am employed, I have the opportunity to see educators who still believe in the seemingly impossible. The workload is exceptionally intense. Agreeing to disagree appears to be the status quo more often than in previous years. Administrators are required to be instructional leaders. Teachers are required to do more differently. Monitoring has indeed changed what is happening in numerous sites.

Why is that second grader haunting me? Why do I wake up at 3:00 a.m. wondering if the system will recognize his determination? I would have given this student at least 100 pencils and given the teacher the required "feedback." Is this the answer? I think not. More importantly this experience inspired me to remind you that your work as reading teachers is vitally important. Even if you work quietly every day with a little, you do make a difference in the literate lives of your students!

Your participation by reading this journal, research on reading, or even the daily newspaper can make a difference. I hope that you will be inspired to keep up the good work by attending the International Reading Association Convention, May 4 - 8, 2008 in Atlanta. Georgia's students need your attendance and dedication to reading. *Your work has just begun.*

Sincerely,

Alita Anderson

President, Georgia Reading Association

The Status of Literacy and Literacy Teacher Education in Georgia: Highlights from the 2006 Literacy Summit



JOYCE E. MANY

In the summer of 2006, the University System of Georgia's Reading Consortium¹ and the Georgia Department of Education hosted a Literacy Summit, bringing together faculty from public and private institutions in Georgia and representatives from the Department of Education and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. The purpose of this summit was to analyze the status of literacy and literacy teacher education in Georgia, to reflect on research which could inform the state's progress, and to develop position statements and recommendations to guide future work in this area.

The notion of bringing together key stakeholders to consider literacy issues and envision possibilities is not a new one. In 2005, the Conference on English Education (CEE) convened educators from across the country with the purpose of rethinking the preparation and professional development of English language arts teachers and teacher educators (Fox & Miller, 2006). Patterned after the 1966 Dartmouth Seminar (Muller, 1967) and the 1987 English Coalition Conference (Lloyd-Jones & Lunsford, 1989), the CEE Leadership and Policy Summit addressed critical issues related to English education, English teacher preparation, education of diverse learners, technology and

multi-modal literacies, and the politics of research and literacy.

Although the concept of the Literacy Summit was stimulated by these meetings², this colloquium also differed in several ways. In contrast to the national agenda and the concentration on English education in previous sessions, the 2006 Literacy Summit was designed to focus specifically on literacy achievement and literacy teacher preparation in the state of Georgia. To establish the context, keynote speakers addressed the status of literacy and the preparation of teachers from the national perspective (Dole, 2006) and from the state perspectives of the Board of Regents (BOR) (Kettlewell, 2006), the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) (Domaleski, 2006), and the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) (Wiseberg, 2006). Next, over 80 university faculty members, Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) staff, BOR representatives and DOE educators focused their attention on Georgia public school students' performance on the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), on Georgia teacher assessment and accreditation data, and on research focusing on best practice in literacy and literacy teacher education. Based upon this information, small groups participated in lengthy discussions to determine where Georgia's students are now, where Georgia's teacher education programs are now, and where they need to be. In light of these discussions, specific recommendations were made and position statements were developed for the various working groups.

Highlights from the 2006 Literacy Summit

Literacy in Pre-K Through Grade 3

The working group focusing on the status of literacy achievement of Georgia students in Pre-K through grade 3 was convened by Sheryl Dasinger from Valdosta State University. After analyzing data related to early literacy in Georgia, the participants noted the following:

- Readily available CRCT data does not

provide enough information to fully understand what is needed, instructionally, for the young children of Georgia.

- The NAEP data show a lack of significant growth from 1992 – 2005.
- A review of the content of the NAEP suggests a higher level of proficiency is needed in the areas of critical reading, thinking, and responding to text.

An analysis of research in the literacy field related to achievement in Pre-K through Grade 3 led the group to also note that while the areas of alphabets (phonemic awareness and phonics), fluency, and comprehension (vocabulary) identified by the National Reading Panel are important, there is a more comprehensive set of dimensions that are necessary in the development of the complex processes of literacy.

Elementary Literacy Teacher Education

Another group, focused on the literacy preparation of early childhood teachers, was led by Beth Pendergraft of Augusta State University. This group's analysis identified confusions that were apparent regarding the Georgia reading endorsement (Beatty, Feaster, & Many, 2000) and the state requirements for undergraduate preparation in teaching reading. According to the Professional Standards Commission, students who graduate from PSC-approved teacher preparation programs have earned the equivalent of the reading endorsement; however, students who have graduated have not been receiving this designation on their certificate.

1 The USG Reading Consortium is a collaborative initiative of reading faculty, classroom teachers, and representatives from the Department of Education, Professional Standards Commission, and the University System who are focused on meeting the needs of Georgia's teachers and students. The consortium provides for statewide collaboration among professionals engaged in improving the literacy performance of students P-12. For more information see the USG Reading Consortium's website: <http://msit.gsu.edu/readingconsortium/>

2 Our appreciation is extended to Dr. Dana Fox from Georgia State University for sharing information regarding the organization and implementation of CEE's 2005 Summit. Her input was instrumental in the conceptualization of Georgia's 2006 Literacy Summit.

The position of the elementary literacy teacher preparation subgroup was that undergraduate students do not obtain the same competencies in their initial preparation programs as graduate students who enroll in the traditional reading endorsement programs in our state. To earn a reading endorsement at the graduate level requires an advanced level of implementation, knowledge, and commitment. Based on this discussion, the elementary literacy teacher education group prepared the following recommendation which was approved by the USG Reading Consortium board members and presented to the Professional Standards Commission:

- Undergraduate students should not receive the reading endorsement.
- Undergraduate students should receive a designation of “highly qualified” in reading.

In addition, the elementary teacher education group noted that to achieve consistent standards for literacy teacher training, every Georgia elementary teacher preparation program should ensure that its teacher candidates have essential core knowledge. In addition, these teacher candidates should be able to apply their acquired knowledge and skills to positively impact PreK-5 students’ learning. Members noted that this core knowledge must go beyond the five areas identified by the National Reading Panel’s report and should be aligned with current professional standards and the new Georgia Framework for Teaching.

In the article “Literacy Learning and Teacher Education in the Primary Grades” in this themed issue, summit participants Sheryl Dasinger, Sallie Miller, and Beth Pendergraft explore in detail the work of the P-3 Literacy and the Elementary Literacy Teacher Preparation groups and the data which informed their discussions. Their article describes the educators’ critical conversations, their beliefs concerning a core body of knowledge that all reading teachers should know, and how the educators are working to improve reading instruction to impact student reading achievement in Georgia.



Literacy in Grades 4 and 5

The working group focused on the literacy achievement of Georgia students in grades 4 and 5 were led in discussion by Alicia McCartney from the Georgia Department of Education and Michelle Commeryas from the University of Georgia. The following key points emerged in their discussion of the data related to literacy:

- Results from the CRCT show that English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities have the greatest need for better instruction in reading and language arts. Students identified as “Black” or “Hispanic” represent the next level of need. Students identified as “Asian, White, Native American/Alaskan and Multiracial” have the greatest success in passing the CRCT.
- Results from the NAEP show that students identified as “Black” scored an average of 27 points lower than their “Asian, Pacific Islander or White” peers. Students identified as “Hispanic” scored an average of 23 points lower than their “Asian, Pacific Islander, or White” peers. From a

socioeconomic (SES) perspective, students who qualify for free/reduced lunch scored an average of 28 points lower than those who did not. And, from a gender perspective, 4th grade boys scored an average of 10 points lower than their female peers.

After analyzing research focusing on literacy achievement at the intermediate grades, the 4-5th grade group determined that in addition to the recommendations made by the National Reading Panel, literacy teachers should understand that:

- literacy instruction and learning changes as students move from the beginning to intermediate stages of literacy; and,
- literacy teacher education efforts and reform should involve a partnership between education institutions and policy-making entities such as the local boards of education, the GA legislature, the Professional Standards Commission, and the Georgia Dept. of Education.

Literacy in Grades 6-8 in Georgia

Joyce Many from Georgia State University facilitated the work of group members focusing on literacy in grades 6-8. This group's data analysis for middle graders' literacy achievement in Georgia indicated:

- CRCT and NAEP results illustrate a large gap in achievement based upon ethnicity with students identified as "Black" and "Hispanic" struggling to meet even basic achievement levels.
- NAEP results indicated Georgia students from lower income families score far below students from families with more financial resources. Forty-eight percent of the children on free and reduced lunch score below the basic level of proficiency as compared with only 20% of those whose family income makes them ineligible for free and reduced lunch.
- According to the NAEP results, Georgia's 8th graders' literacy levels have not changed significantly since 1998.

The middle grades literacy group's analysis of related research led to the following position statements:

- Effective literacy instruction for middle grades students is developmental in nature and essential for systemic change leading to improvements in literacy achievement for Georgia's students.
- Middle school students must be exposed to and nurtured as critical consumers of various forms of texts within academic, social, community, and political contexts. Teachers and teacher educators must systematically scaffold students' development of strategies for critical thinking across multiple texts and media formats.

Middle Level Literacy Teacher Education

The working group focusing on the literacy preparation within teacher education programs for middle level teachers was led by Faith Wallace of Kennesaw State University. This group's analysis of the status of Georgia's middle level literacy teacher preparation noted that there is currently a lack of highly qualified middle-grades reading teachers in Georgia. Few initial teacher preparation programs include reading as a concentration of emphasis for middle childhood majors. In addition, only a small percentage of the Georgia teachers who have pursued a reading endorsement or a reading specialist certificate are employed at the middle grades level.

This group's concerns with the current status of teacher education programs led to a position statement that included the following beliefs about middle grades literacy teacher preparation:

- teachers should be familiar with the vast psychological, emotional, social, physical, and cognitive changes that are typical of most early adolescents while recognizing the need for instruction that is individually appropriate;
- there should be an increased emphasis on the need to understand the literacy learning processes of early adolescents;

- teacher preparation programs should emphasize the need for extensive collaboration with teachers in a variety of content areas;
- the acquisition of literacy learning is both social and political, and as such, teacher preparation programs should stress social justice and equity.

The work of the Literacy in Grades 4-5 group, Literacy in Grades 6-8 group, and Middle-Level Teacher Preparation group is synthesized and expanded in this issue's article, "Literacy and Literacy Teacher Education in Grades 4-8" by Faith Wallace, Joyce Many, Barbara Stanley, Shannon Howrey, John Ponder, Teresa Fisher, and Eudes Aoulou. These authors contend that while the percentage of Georgia's students achieving even a basic level of literacy has not changed significantly since 1992, the literacy demands of today's society has changed at a rapid pace. Given this fact and the emphasis on reading in the new Georgia Performance Standards, the authors call for an increased focus on reading preparation for middle-level teachers.

Literacy in Grades 9-12 and in Secondary Teacher Preparation

Another summit working group focused both on literacy achievement of 9th-12th graders in Georgia and the degree to which secondary teachers are prepared to address the literacy needs of these students. Participants' discussions were led by Harriett Allison and Donna Alvermann from the University of Georgia. The group determined that literacy practices for Grades 9-12 education are not sufficiently reflective of the opportunities and skills that all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse youth in Georgia, need to succeed in an increasingly technological and globalized economy.

Although a small but growing research base for 9-12 literacy practices is available, it is generally insufficient for guiding teacher preparation and school-based practice. This insufficiency is due in part to lack of a concerted state-wide focus on 9-12 literacy. One way of addressing this issue would be to focus attention on grades 9-12

literacy that is comparable to the emphasis placed on early literacy.

Georgia needs to raise standards and expectations for all students, especially for the 42% of youth in Georgia who score below the basic level on NAEP tests. There should be widespread awareness of the importance of literacy strategies for enabling student mastery of content in all disciplines. Recognizing that young people's literacy practices outside of school can serve as bridges to motivate students' in-school literacy will assist both teachers and students in the various disciplines (e.g., history, mathematics, biology, literature, and so on). For this to happen, however, there must be a concerted effort to develop school structures that support and encourage flexible, dynamic, collaborative, and interdisciplinary literacy practices, which in turn reflect real-world literacy competencies.

In this issue's article, "Secondary Literacy Education: Refocusing National and State Interest," Jacqueline Tobias addresses these issues as she substantiates the group's contention of the need for an emphasis on adolescent literacy through state programs and professional preparation.

Literacy for Students with Disabilities and Special Education Literacy Teacher Education in Georgia

The small group addressing the needs of Georgia's students with disabilities and the literacy preparation of their teachers was facilitated by Phil Gunter and Julia Reffel. These Summit participants found that, legislative reforms (e.g., NCLB; IDEA 2004) and state policy (e.g., GaDOE) goals regarding integration of students with disabilities may have resulted in what appears to be positive changes for students with mild/moderate disabilities. Domaleski (2006) indicated that 4th grade students with disabilities have increased in the percentage meeting or exceeding standards on the Georgia CRCT over the past five years by 25%. During this time period, NCLB was passed in 2001 and IDEA was reauthorized in 2004. Both of these explicitly directed that a greater



percentage of students with disabilities would be presented the general curriculum; NCLB by restricting the number of students exempt from the general education curriculum assessment and IDEA 2004 by requiring an increase in the amount of time students with disabilities spend in general education curriculum.

In anticipation of IDEA 2004 changes, the Georgia DOE Director of Special Education directed all school districts in Georgia to increase the percent of time students with disabilities spent in general education classrooms; in turn, Georgia moved from 49th among states in this measure to near the midpoint. At the same time, while much progress has been made in all areas of achievement of

students with disabilities, they still remain among the lowest performing subgroups in reading and English language arts, as measured by the Georgia CRCT.

This working group also noted that Georgia's teachers of students with disabilities may or may not have received sufficient training in literacy education. In the past, teachers of students with disabilities have only been required to take one reading course. On the other hand, most special educators are required to teach reading and students with disabilities do not make the gains that their peers without special needs make in the area of reading. Recent changes in state certification policies, however, have addressed this issue. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission established new Special Education rules effective November 15, 2005 (SS 505-3-.30). According to the rules, the Special Education General Curriculum Program requirements include: "the completion of a content concentration in social science, science, math, language arts or reading. A content concentration shall consist of fifteen (15) semester hours of academic content that conforms with the requirements of content concentration for middle grades."

Although the group members noted that this was a positive step, certification still does not require that all special education teachers, regardless of concentration, take more than one course in the teaching of reading. Therefore, while many programs in Georgia may now be including the content area of reading as a concentration area in the Special Education General Curriculum program, special education programs could still be developed with only the one-course reading requirement.

Literacy and Literacy Teacher Preparation for English Language Learners

Educators interested in English language learners (ELLs) and preparation of teachers of English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) in Georgia were participants in the small group facilitated by Evelyne Barker of the Georgia Department of Education. The needs of ELL students in Georgia also emerged as a theme

running through many of the other small group discussions. From 1992-2002, Georgia led all 50 states with a 378% increase in English language learners. In 2002, this phenomena and the fact that 116 districts in Georgia had ESOL learners, led the PSC to create a new initial certification in ESOL focusing on individuals who wish to become ESOL teachers but who are not already in education. In their article, "The Status of ESOL Teacher Education in the State of Georgia," Cathleen Doheny and Gertrude Tinker Sachs draw on the issues raised in their small group as well as the concerns noted in other groups to explore the how to improve the education of second language learners in Georgia.

Addressing Literacy and Literacy Education in Georgia: Next Steps

Following the 2006 Literacy Summit, USG Reading Consortium members met to consider the recommendations of each of the working groups. One theme running through the recommendations was the need for research examining how literacy teacher educators are prepared. As a result, three research teams were formed to address the following questions: (1) What do universities in the state teach elementary preservice teachers about the teaching of reading? (2) What do universities in the state teach middle school preservice teachers about the teaching of reading and/or literacy in the content areas? (3) What do universities in the state teach secondary content area (math, science, social studies, or English) preservice teachers about the teaching of reading and/or literacy in the content areas?

Parallel studies began in spring 2007 to examine the preparation of teachers at private institutions, state and regional institutions, and research universities. This research will inform policy makers, university faculty, and literacy researchers regarding the content of teacher preparation programs with respect to reading/literacy instruction. These comprehensive state-wide studies are the first step toward understanding not only the content of

Georgia's teacher preparation programs but also the effectiveness of these programs.

In addition, USG Reading Consortium and Summit members began working in spring and summer 2007 with a Georgia Department of Education Reading Advisory Board to conceptualize a state reading initiative for K-12 literacy in the state. Acknowledging the developmental nature of literacy abilities across students' elementary, middle and secondary years, this initiative will take into account the changing nature of literacy in today's society. Discussions have focused on the need to give attention not only to readers who are struggling to develop their reading abilities but also to readers who, while proficient, must move beyond fluency and basic comprehension abilities. To ensure all of our students' success, education in Georgia must address the complex literacy strategies demanded in the content areas and teachers at all levels must have access to professional development and resources to support such efforts.

Through these initiatives, educators in schools, universities, and public institutions are collaboratively examining the issues surrounding literacy and literacy teacher preparation in Georgia. The 2006 Literacy Summit provided the opportunity to evaluate the literacy performance of students across the state and to explore issues related to teacher preparation. The articles which follow in this themed issue provide an in-depth examination of these areas and draw on research in the literacy field to highlight recommendations and future directions. By continuing to work together, education professionals can effectively address the literacy needs of all of Georgia's students as well as the teachers who will support them.

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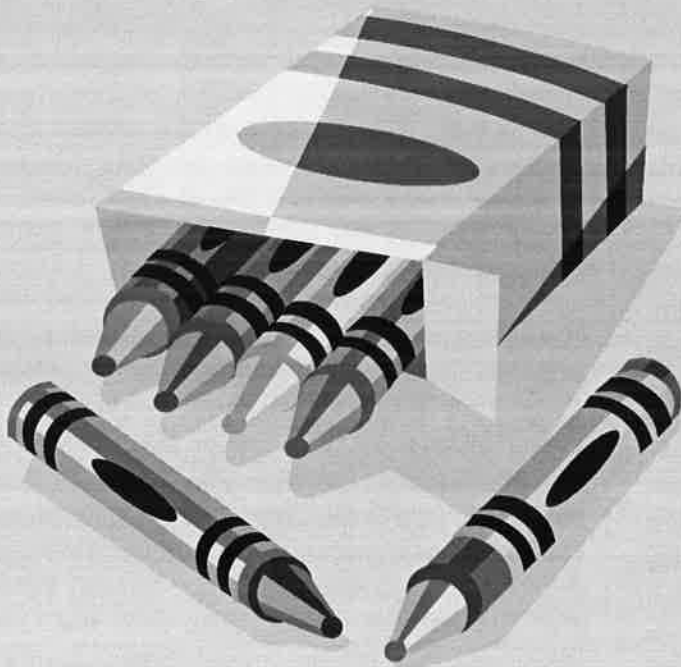
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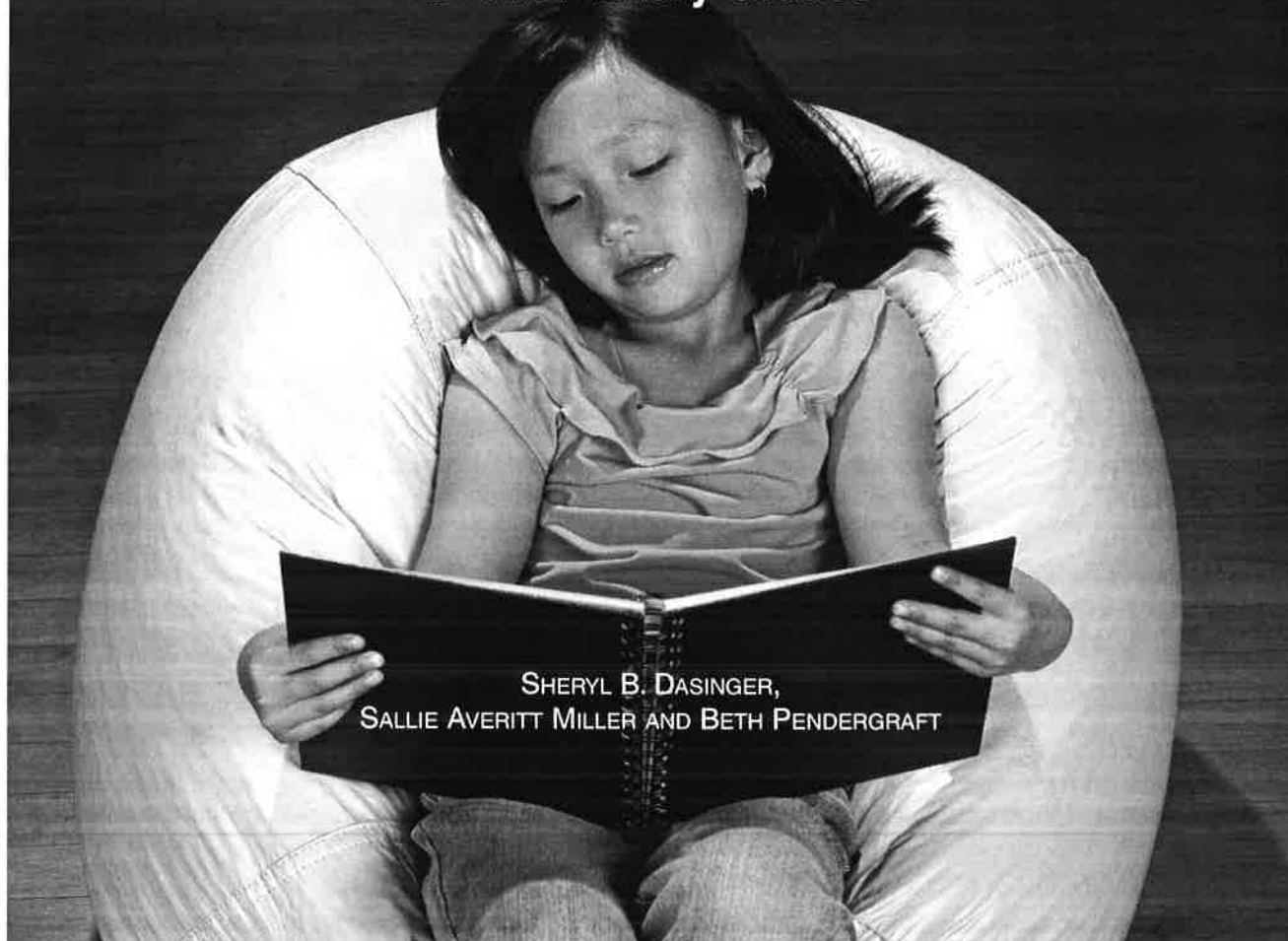
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Literacy Learning and Teacher Education in the Primary Grades



SHERYL B. DASINGER,
SALLIE AVERITT MILLER AND BETH PENDERGRAFT

Learning to read effectively remains an elusive goal for far too many of this nation's children. Several statistics support the premise that despite copious amounts of research conducted each year into the best methods for teaching reading, many children remain at risk of failure in school. It has been estimated that 20% to 50% of first graders in the United States experience some difficulty in learning how to read (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1995). Richek, Caldwell, Jennings and Lerner (1996) estimated that one-third of the school population in America has learning problems related to reading. Between the academic years 1976-77 and 1989-90, the number of U.S. students receiving instruction for learning disabilities increased approximately 150%, while the total number of students remained the same (Weaver, 1994). Annually,

one out of nine students in the United States receives remedial reading services (Slavin & Madden, 1989) while 40% of California's first grade children are eligible for Title I services (Hiebert, 1994).

While there is some improvement in reading achievement since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind legislation, schools in the United States still have a long way to go to help children become more proficient readers. This is especially true in Georgia where results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (typically called America's report card) indicate that 71% of 4th graders who took the test in 2005 scored at or below basic levels of proficiency. A look at the long-term trends indicates that Georgia's scaled reading scores have improved slightly but not significantly since

1992. This may be an indication that Georgia's students are not reading at a level that will help them be competitive in a complex, global society.

Teacher educators in Georgia are concerned about preparing teachers who can help children attain high levels of proficiency in literacy. As a result, representative teacher educators from public and private institutions that prepare teachers came together in the summer of 2006 to look at our state data. We used the data as a spring-board to develop our consensus values and beliefs to support pre-service and in-service teachers in educating students in grades Pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade. In the following sections we will describe those critical conversations, our beliefs concerning a core body of knowledge that all reading teachers should know, and how we are working to improve reading instruction to impact student reading achievement in Georgia.

Literacy and Literacy Teacher Preparation Program

Although many relevant and important topics were discussed during the 2006 Literacy Summit, common threads of information and concerns continued to emerge in the hours of discourse. Thus, the Pre-kindergarten through 3rd Grade Summit Group articulated the following primary position during the summit: To achieve consistent standards for literacy teacher training, every Georgia Pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade teacher preparation program should ensure that its pre-service teachers have essential core knowledge in literacy that is research based. In addition, the pre-service teachers should be able to apply their acquired knowledge and skills to positively impact Pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade students' learning.

What is the essential core knowledge in literacy for pre-service teachers? The Pre-kindergarten through 3rd Grade Group recognized the National Reading Panel's Report as an obvious response, in part, to this question. In addition to the five areas (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension) of

reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel, the group discussed the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge that should be taught in the primary grades as a foundation for developing literate adults. This group agreed that there is a core body of knowledge that all teachers of reading need to know. However, the participants believe there is a more comprehensive set of dimensions beyond the five addressed by the National Reading Panel that is necessary in the development of the complex process of literacy. These expanded dimensions include the following:

- oral language development including phonological awareness, vocabulary, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic usage (Pullen & Justice, 2003);
- concepts about print and visual processing of print (Clay, 2002); the reading/writing connection as reciprocal processes (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000);
- listening, speaking, viewing, and visual literacy (Smollin & Lawless, 2003);
- time, choice, and opportunity for discussion and response to literature (Beck, McKeown, Worthy, Sandora & Kucan, 1996);
- an on-going variety of assessments that inform instruction (Hansen, 1998); and technology that is available, effective, and teachers know to use (Leu, Castek, Henry, Coiro, & McMullan, 2004). This group also felt very strongly that there needs to be room for variation in instructional methods based on the needs of individual learners (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). While this list is not exhaustive, the participants felt very strongly that these dimensions be noted.

How Did the Literacy Summit Discussion and Study Impact Three Georgia Universities in Terms of Pre-service Teacher Education and Student Achievement?

First, the universities reviewed and revised [when needed] the current literacy curriculum to strengthen the focus on essential core knowledge. Three universities will elaborate on this process in the next section.

Secondly, the universities acknowledged field experiences as an important component in the application of essential core knowledge in literacy education. The Pre-kindergarten through 3rd Grade Group acknowledged that teacher educators, prospective teachers, and classroom teachers have long identified field experiences as a major, if not the most important, part of pre-service teacher preparation. It is broadly assumed that field experiences are the key components of preparation where prospective teachers learn to bridge theory and practice, work with colleagues and families, and develop pedagogical and curricular strategies for meeting the learning needs of a diverse population (Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

Augusta State University

Faculty at Augusta State University spent the semester prior to the summit working on a Backward Mapping project examining the literacy courses currently taught to see where any gaps or overlap may occur. As a result, conversations were already in progress about possible changes that might need to occur. Some work had already begun including the alignment of all undergraduate courses to the current International Reading Association Standards, the inclusion of all Georgia Performance Standards, and the incorporation of the National Reading Panel data into the appropriate courses. After the summit, ASU instructors responsible for the education of early childhood literacy courses continued the discussions started at the summit.

Plans are in place to change the title of two courses to include the word READING or LITERACY and to change the course description of at least one of the courses. Instructors responsible for the four required reading courses are examining the objectives of the courses to check for overlapping content and to assure that the objectives in the syllabi accurately reflect what is being taught in the classes. In addition, course assessments are being aligned to course objectives to assure that the outcomes being measured accurately reflect the course objectives.

Finally, Augusta State University is in the process of designing a Master's of Arts and Teaching degree for Early Childhood Education. Graduate students who earn this Master's degree will earn initial certification. Because students needed four classes in reading, the three reading endorsement classes were built into this graduate program. The fourth class is a children's literature pedagogy course.

Augusta State University was one of the schools selected to participate in the University System of Georgia's Reading Consortium's research on Early Childhood Literacy Teacher Preparation. The Dean has give permission for the faculty to participate and the instructors are looking forward to participating in this groundbreaking research.

Columbus State University

The Reading Consortium has greatly influenced this university's teacher education reading curriculum; the summit reinforced that the Reading Consortium is on target with the major components [National Reading Panel's researched-based areas for reading success—phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension] that structure quintessential core knowledge for the Columbus State University, College of Education reading courses. In addition to the National Reading Panel's research and other reading research [Best Practices], the College of Education's emphasis in its reading curriculum includes a strong focus on assessment in both its undergraduate and graduate programs.

The pre-service and in-service teacher responds to struggling readers by identifying the problem(s) [formal and informal assessment using reading technology and other appropriate assessment instruments], providing appropriate intervention based on assessment results, and, then, post-assessing to measure student achievement and adjust instruction. Does this plan work? Significant data collected confirms that student achievement improves with this direct approach to reading instruction.

Columbus State University's undergraduate and graduate reading courses stress the importance



of knowledge application through course-required field experiences. Thus under the supervision of their professor, students apply their acquired knowledge and skills in partner schools, on-campus reading institutes and camps, and, if a graduate student, the teacher's own classroom. It is common knowledge that the pre-service and inservice teachers benefit from their training and hands-on experience. Who else benefits from this venue? Assessment data supports that the children are the primary beneficiaries of the College of Education field experiences in reading—their academic achievement is enhanced. During their one-on-one experiences, the child's achievement is improved and often there is a grade level increase in reading ability [word recognition, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency].

To summarize, the summit served as a confirmation that the College of Education's reading courses are aligned with research as well as what other reading-teacher educators consider essential to teacher preparation [essential core knowledge in literacy for pre-service teachers]. Furthermore, the College of Education's reading courses are aligned with the International Reading Association Standards,

the Georgia Performance Standards, and the National Reading Panel's Report.

The reading field experiences were also validated during the summit as an essential component. Both the undergraduate and graduate reading courses include field experience, classroom-based reading research [Best Practices], and case studies. The 2006 Literacy Summit served to validate, reinforce, and strengthen the CSU position on teacher education in the field of reading.

Valdosta State University

Valdosta State University's Early Childhood and Reading program received national accreditation from the International Reading Association and the Association for Early Childhood International in the fall of 2006. Discussions held at the Higher Education Summit guided our thinking as we developed assessments to document that our teacher candidates met national and state standards. Faculty members also reviewed course syllabi and assessment data to note areas for improvement in our program.

Valdosta State continues to be on the cutting edge in literacy research and service to the schools in our region. The Dewar College of Education will also participate in the University System of Georgia's research on Literacy Teacher Preparation. Additionally, Valdosta State is one of 15 universities selected to serve on The National Reading First Higher Education Consortium (NRFHEC). The NRFHEC is a joint venture between the National Center for Reading First Technical Assistance (NCRFTA) and the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGCRLA) at the University of Texas at Austin. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, NRFHEC is designed to develop a faculty leadership model that will promote and sustain the integration of scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) and scientifically-based reading instruction (SBRI) into pre-service teacher preparation programs. Valdosta State is pleased to represent Georgia on this national consortium.

In addition to research, Valdosta State is proud of its history of service to local schools. Many faculty members serve as consultants to local school districts and the impact on these schools is well documented. We are especially proud of our partner school, S.L. Mason, that achieved the Georgia Accountability System Silver Award. This award is given to schools that have made Adequate Yearly Progress for the last two years and exhibit the greatest gain in percentage of students meeting and exceeding the standards (96th percentile). The faculty of the College of Education continues to work toward the goal of developing teachers who are knowledgeable, expert practitioners who can also implement evidence-based strategies to meet the literacy needs of a diverse population of learners.

Recommendations

To achieve consistent standards for literacy teacher training, every Georgia Pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade teacher preparation program should ensure that its pre-service teachers have essential core knowledge in literacy that is research based. Pre-service teachers should be able to apply their acquired knowledge and skills to positively impact pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade students' learning and other critical literacy dimensions, the discussions of the working groups recommended that the University System of Georgia's Reading Consortium write a formal request that the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) review and clarify the current position on undergraduate students receiving the reading endorsement. There was some discussion regarding the confusion concerning when schools were offering the reading endorsement for graduate credit and were now told that undergraduate students would be receiving the reading endorsement upon graduation. Members of the literacy teacher preparation group felt that students who completed the reading endorsement at a graduate level demonstrated a higher mastery level than newly graduating teachers. Recognizing the need to show that recent graduates are highly qualified to teach reading, members of the summit asked that the PSC consider a special designation of "highly qualified" on teaching certificates rather than

undergraduates being given the reading endorsement.

In addition, the Pre-Kindergarten through 3rd Grade Group discussed the need for continued mentoring after graduation. The literacy teacher preparation group suggested that the Reading Consortium work closely with groups currently working with teacher induction in the state to enhance induction programs in the area of literacy education.

Finally, the members of the summit spent a significant amount of time addressing the research or lack of meaningful, significant, quality research in the area of early childhood literacy teacher preparation in the state of Georgia. Members of the summit discussed possible alternative forms of research that would allow the Consortium to obtain relevant data to ascertain the status of literacy teacher preparation in the state of Georgia. Possible forms of data included gathering information from syllabi and instructors to create a matrix of objectives that are covered in courses taught across the state.

These recommendations were presented at the final session of the literacy summit. The Reading Consortium has acted upon two of the three recommendations. A letter with the recommendation to the PSC has been submitted to the Consortium and the Consortium has adopted literacy teacher preparation as its research agenda. Universities that prepare early childhood teachers have been contacted at random and asked to participate in a research study. Hopefully at the end of this two to three-year study, we will know more about the status of literacy teacher preparation in the state of Georgia.

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To learn to read is to light a fire;
every syllable that is spelled out
is a spark.

– VICTOR HUGO, *Les Miserables*



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Fill out the form below and mail it with a check for \$15.00 (\$7.50 for students and retirees) payable to Georgia Reading Association (GRA). **Do not send cash.**

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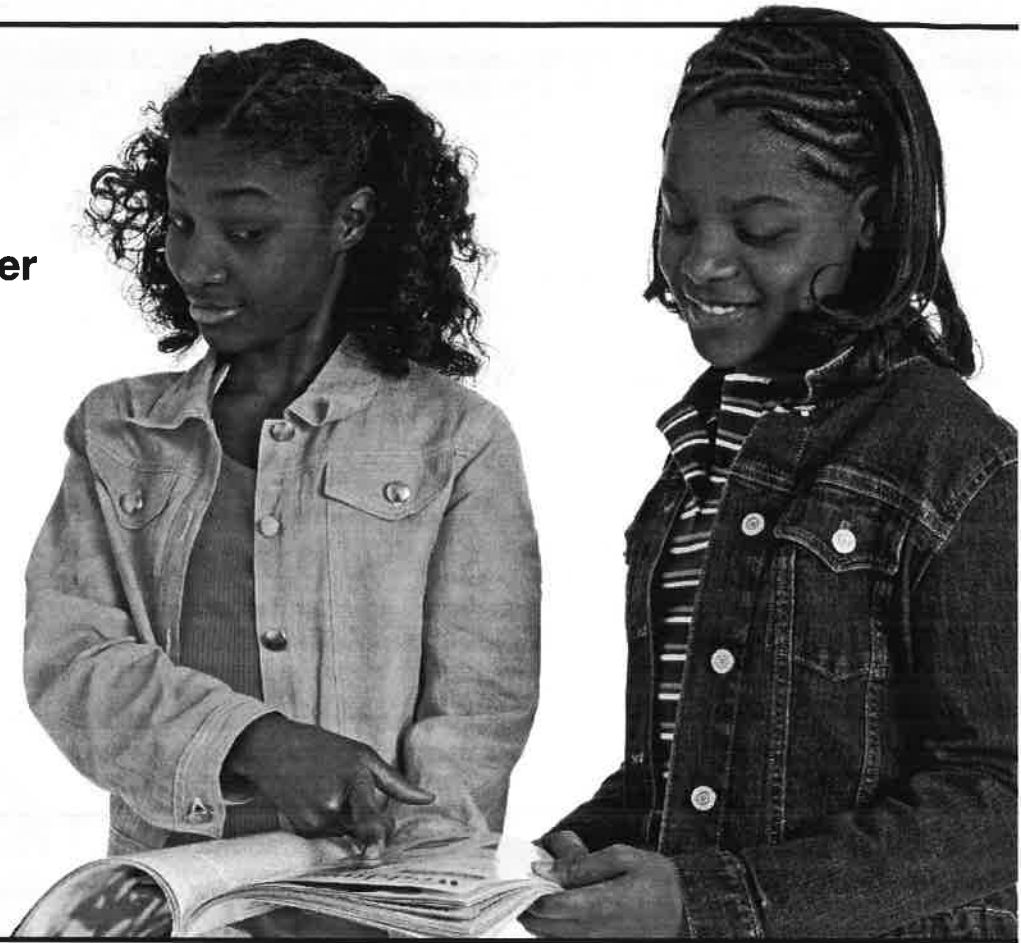
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Literacy and Literacy Teacher Education in Grades 4-8

FAITH H. WALLACE,
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TERESA FISHER
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Reading is a developmental process beginning with a foundation built in the primary grades and continuing throughout the lives of students and adults. Misconceptions arise that every *child will learn to read by third grade*, thus, students will be able to read for a lifetime. However, different and sophisticated reading skills are needed as students progress through grade levels and in life. Reading becomes more complex. The processes of reading, which are necessary for more intensive study, change from *learning to read*, the focus of elementary school instruction to *reading to learn* (Chall, 1983). Text becomes a source of information using technical terms and graphics to further explanations. We specifically emphasize that reading instruction should also change in middle schools, as students are required to engage in more intensive study of subject matter (Irvin, 1992). Adolescent students in middle schools must be critical consumers of information from a multitude of print sources which requires different and additional reading strategies than are used

during the learning to read phase of instruction. Despite the emphasis on the early development of reading skills fostered by the *No Child Left Behind* legislation, content area readers in grades four through high school continue to fall behind. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), administered every other year, is considered by many as the nation's report card for evaluating academic gains of student progress across the United States. This biennial assessment is conducted in various academic fields and grade levels. The assessment of reading in grades 4 and 8 includes three areas: reading for literacy experience, to gain information, and to perform a task, two of the sub areas focusing on reading to learn cited by Chall (1983). On the 2005 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), eighth-grade students' scores continued to decline from previous years with 29 percent of students reading below the basic level (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005).

Georgia Students

Georgia students' performance has remained consistently below the national averages in fourth-grade testing. From 1992 to 2005, fourth-grade students' reading scores indicated no significant difference from year to year for students who performed at or above the NAEP Basic Level, including Proficient and Advanced Levels. Eighth-grade students appear to have increased their ability with informational reading tasks when compared to the performance of fourth-grade students, with a larger percentage of students testing at or above the Basic Level in 1998, in 2003, and in 2005. However, caution must be taken since the percentage of Georgia students above the basic level (high 60%) is still below the national level of 71% for 2005 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

More distressing indicators are evident when we look closely at those Georgia students who do not meet the Basic Level of literacy as tested by the NAEP, as was the case for 42 percent of the fourth grade students. In 2005, fourth-grade girls out performed boys by at least 10 percentage points with 47% of the boys not achieving a basic level of proficiency but only 37% of the girls not scoring at the basic level. A similar difference in eighth grade percentages exists with 39% of male students and 27% of female students scoring below Basic Level. Further contrasts are apparent when NAEP results for Georgia students are examined in light of students' race. At the fourth-grade level, 60% of the state's African American students score below the basic level of proficiency, with Hispanics at 54%, Caucasian at 25%, and Asian/Pacific Islander at 16%. In the eighth-grade, the percentages continue to drop, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

An additional perspective on Georgia's middle grade students' literacy achievement can be obtained by analyzing the results for the Georgia's Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). Examination of the 2006 standardized test scores for fourth and fifth graders on the CRCT indicate two subgroups are considerably less successful than their

counterparts. Students identified as English language learners (ELL) and the students with disabilities had a much lower rate of passing the CRCT than their classmates. English language learners struggled on this assessment with only 50% of ELL fourth graders and 46% of ELL fifth graders passing the reading section. The percentages of students with disabilities who passed the state reading assessment in fourth grade was 61% and in fifth grade 59%. In other words, students from these two subgroups have the greatest need for better instruction in reading and language arts. Given these findings, the students in Georgia clearly need strong literacy teachers, texts that support learning, and tasks that students can perform successfully. This is critical as we become more of a text-based consumer society and technology is changing more rapidly than ever before.

Effective Middle Grades Literacy Instruction

Reading to learn has long been used to describe the transition in literacy focus between the primary and intermediate grades. In grades four through eight, students encounter texts which present new and different challenges in vocabulary and comprehension. First, texts that are used in these grades require that students have more content-specific vocabulary knowledge (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). Consequently, effective vocabulary instruction for middle grades includes teaching selected words and allowing for repeated practice in a language- and word-rich classroom environment (Blachowicz, Fisher, & Watts-Taffe, 2005), as well as teaching generative word elements (e.g. morphemes) and contextual analysis for independent word-solving (Baumann, Edwards, Font, Tereshinski, Kame'enui, & Olejnik, 2002; Carlisle & Stone, 2005).

Second, an increase in text quantity and difficulty, particularly in the content-areas, requires that students have an established base of comprehension skills and strategies. For example, students need the ability to organize more complex ideas (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005) and recognize structural patterns within text (Armbruster, 1991). They need to be able to activate strategies such as accessing prior

knowledge (Stahl, 1989), creating images as they read (Gambrell & Bales, 1986), generating questions (Davey & McBride, 1986), monitoring comprehension (Baker & Zimlin, 1989), and remembering what they have read (McMahon & Wells, 2007).

While greater independence of learning is expected in grades four through eight, children are diverse in the literacy skills they have acquired (McMahon & Wells, 2007). Effective teachers use a variety of methods to teach and practice these skills, including explicit instruction and modeling (Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991; Ruddell, 1997). Strategies for comprehension of complex texts need to be directly taught, modeled, and practiced continually (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Gambrell, Morrow, Pressley, & Guthrie, 2006), as students take on more responsibility for learning. Effective teachers encourage and support students' growing independence through multiple grouping strategies offering varied amounts of support as needed (Thomas & Barksdale-Ladd, 1995).

Concurrent with this stance, effective middle-grades teachers consider learning a work in progress. Student work is evaluated on multiple qualities rather than on a single achievement standard, with the goal of providing specific feedback on progress to the student and as a formative tool in planning for future lessons (Allington & Johnston, 2002). Effective teachers are able monitor this progress through an in-depth knowledge of reading and writing processes (Ruddell, 1997), and there is clear evidence that the expertise of the teacher in these areas affects the rate and depth of student learning (Block, 2001; International Reading Association, 2000).

Intermediate-grade students at every level need to be motivated to persist in navigating the more sophisticated cognitive demands required by texts (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). Teachers need to be aware of how to motivate their students, despite the fact that intrinsic motivation to read begins to decline sometime after the fourth grade (Gottfried, 1985; McKenna, Kear, &

Ellsworth, 1995). Effective teachers model not only comprehension strategies but enjoyment and participation in the reading process. In their classrooms, learning often takes the form of shared inquiry through discussion of topics, with reading integrated throughout subject areas (Knapp, 1995; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991). Teachers create stimulating activities with personal relevance to the students (Ruddell, 1997; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991), and there is evidence that curriculum which supports student autonomy and choice, real-world connections, and social collaboration increases both motivation and comprehension skills (Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa, Perencevich, Taboada, Davis, Scaffidi, & Tonks, 2004).

Georgia Middle Grades Literacy Teachers

Clearly, there is a burden on literacy teachers to meet the unique and demanding needs of their students, curriculum, and standards. Perhaps that is why there is currently a lack of highly qualified middle grades reading teachers in Georgia. According to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC), there are no universities in the University System of Georgia with an undergraduate reading program and scant few with an alternative certification program with an emphasis on reading (MAT) (Wiseberg, 2006). There are, however, many universities offering graduate reading programs, specifically the Reading Endorsement.

Georgia middle-grades teachers make up a small percentage of teachers obtaining reading certification as indicated by valid certificates or endorsements in reading as of June 2006. Only 21% of teachers with a Reading Endorsement were middle grades teachers and only 20% of teachers with a Reading Specialist certification were middle grades teachers (Wiseberg, 2006).

With the implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards, the need for highly qualified middle grades reading teachers is more of an issue than ever. Middle grades standards include a reading across the curriculum strand for all content areas at all grade levels. The standard includes providing



students with a wide variety of texts to supplement content learning, discussing texts in the classroom, and building vocabulary through reading. Thus, there is a need for more middle level reading certified teachers, particularly at the initial preparation level. Further, middle grades content area teachers are in need of reading preparation in order to comply with the new reading standards.

At the 2006 Literacy Summit, middle grades educators were charged with the professional preparation of middle school literacy teachers and discussed these issues. Their concerns with the current status of teacher education programs led to a position statement on middle grades literacy teacher preparation, composed of the following beliefs:

- Middle-grades teachers should be familiar with the vast psychological, emotional, social, physical, and cognitive changes that are typical of most early adolescents while recognizing the need for instruction that is individually appropriate;
- There should be an increased emphasis on the need to understand the literacy learning processes of early adolescents in middle-grades teacher preparation programs;
- Teacher preparation programs should include careful placement of pre-service teachers with model teachers in field settings where they will observe and participate in exemplary middle school education;
- Middle-grade pre-service teachers should have field-based experiences in a variety of

settings to ensure a broad understanding of the school setting;

- Middle-grades teacher preparation programs should include an increased emphasis on service learning;
- Middle-grades teacher preparation programs should emphasize the need for extensive collaboration with teachers in a variety of content areas;
- Middle-grades teacher preparation programs should be based on relevant standards that have been established for middle grades education (e.g., National Middle School Association), literacy (e.g., National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association), and new teacher preparation (e.g., INTASC);
- The acquisition of literacy learning is both social and political, and as such, middle grades teacher preparation programs should stress social justice and equity;
- Assessment should be ongoing and varied in middle school classrooms and should lead to more effective instruction.

Recommendations

As the members of the middle-grades group concluded their discussions, they recognized that efforts to address literacy in the middle grades in Georgia cannot move forward without recognizing the role of the principal in providing the instructional leadership in the school. Hughes and Ubben (1994) and Grisham, Lapp, and Flood (2000) noted that among other roles a site administrator may have, leadership in curriculum development and instructional improvement is central and has increasingly become more important. Given the importance of administrators as curriculum leaders, principals need to be active and inspiring in order to have cohesive, dynamic and effective reading programs. This was stressed by Wepner and Seminoff (1995) who noted that an enriched reading program had administrators, reading specialists, classroom teachers, parents, librarians, auxiliary personnel, school board members, community members and students working closely together to develop and implement a cohesive and system-wide program. Radencich (1995) also added that

successful literacy programs provided opportunities for all students, have a high degree of organization, and create enthusiasm for reading. Each principal has the responsibility and the authority to be perceived as a steward, with the implied commitment of service to people, to the organization, and to the teachers to promote effective reading programs in schools (Senge, 1990).

Grisham, Lapp and Flood's (2000) guidelines for developing effective literacy programs can help principals become literacy stewards, including 1) have mutual concerns with teachers about the school's reading programs, 2) provide needed staff development, 3) get involved with students' literacy activities, and 4) promote awareness of the school's reading programs in the community.

Therefore, the participants in the Summit's groups focusing on literacy in the middle grades and on middle-grades literacy teacher preparation strongly recommended that principals in Georgia follow and apply these principles. Principals need to be knowledgeable and to create a motivating environment for the teachers of reading in middle schools. Sharing mutual concerns with reading teachers and content area teachers, who are also responsible for reading instruction in the middle school, will promote the effectiveness of reading programs on a consistent basis, including identification of areas for staff development. Secondly, principals should model literacy acts within the student community, which will provide a

significant impact by example. Finally, principals can be catalysts for involving the whole community to support literacy efforts of teachers and students. Parents, volunteers, and business partners can make powerful contributions, as role models and community reading leaders if they are willing to be involved. By marshalling the support of all stakeholders, principals can set the stage for effective middle school literacy programs. Principals' leadership is an important key element to have cohesive, dynamic and effective reading programs in middle schools.

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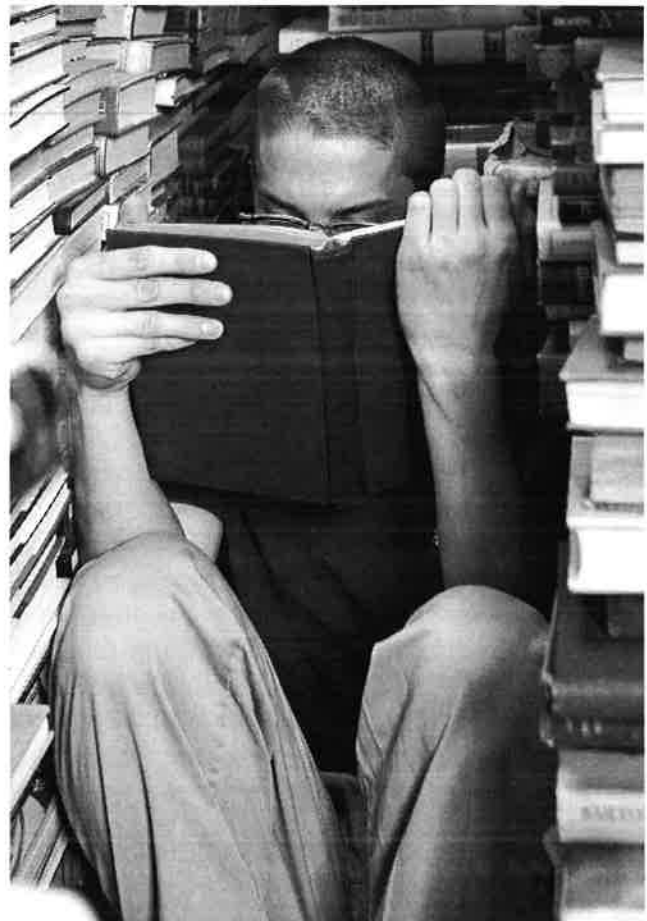
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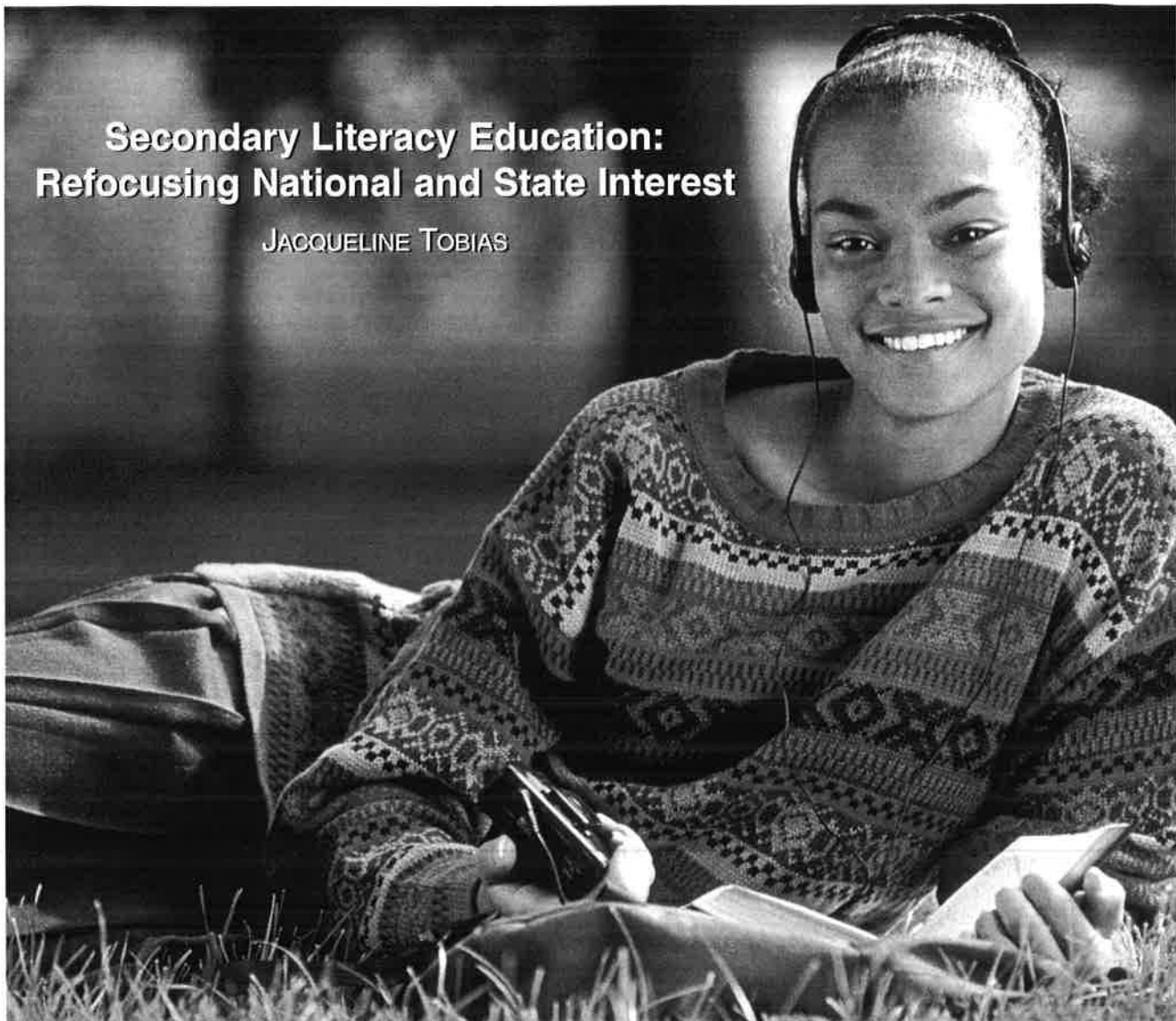
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Secondary Literacy Education: Refocusing National and State Interest

JACQUELINE TOBIAS



For more than a decade, investigations and debates from national reading panels, school reform policies, and the No Child Left Behind Act have amplified the need for basic literacy skills and focused national attention on early literacy. In 2005, recognizing the need to support underachieving high school students, the Striving Readers Initiative was proposed and funded at \$24.8 million the first year and \$29.7 in 2006. For fiscal year 2007, \$100 million has been requested, a \$70.3 million dollar increase (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007). National attention, however, remains focused on early literacy even as the need to attend to adolescent literacy grows.

The Need for a Concerted Focus on 9-12 Literacy

The need to focus on secondary literacy and secondary literacy teacher preparation was underscored and elaborated upon during the 2006 Literacy Summit, where members were charged with preparing a summary of the status of literacy in the state of Georgia and framing recommendations. Members of the Secondary Education Literacy Team, scholars from various universities in Georgia and professionals from the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE), not only acknowledged the absence of a concerted focus on adolescent literacy, but also recognized that current literacy practices for 9th-12th grade education are not sufficiently

reflective of the opportunities and skills that culturally and linguistically diverse students need to succeed. Today, millions of high school youth are without the reading skills necessary to access or think critically about the massive amounts of information available nationally and internationally. Further, "young people's literacy skills are not keeping pace with societal demands of living in an information age that changes rapidly and shows no sign of slowing" (Alvermann, 2001, p. 3).

National Trends

Much has been written over the last two decades about declining reading scores and the general "literacy problem" in U.S. high schools, but according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the national trend in reading shows that "at age 17, no measurable differences in performance were found between 1971 and 2004 for any reporting metric" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2004). Despite the national trend illustrating a lack of significant change, the data collected by the NCES in 2005 shows that only 51% of ACT-tested high school graduates are ready for college level reading (ACT Inc., 2006).

Equally disconcerting are the data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2004), which show only 36% of Grade 12 students are reading at proficient/advanced levels. This means that 64% of high school students ready to be graduated are NOT reading at levels that demonstrate competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter. Of that 64%, 22% are reading below basic levels and 42% are reading at basic levels which demonstrate partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade (NCREL, 2005; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2004). As Alvermann (2001) reminds us, "simply put, basic level literacy is insufficient in today's world where both reading and writing tasks required of adolescents are continuing to increase in complexity and difficulty" (p. 4).

Primary findings of the NAEP study reported average scores for age 13 and 17 indicated no measurable differences between assessment years 1999 and 2004, and for the age 17 population, the scores were not measurably different from the 1971 assessment. Average scores for age 17 female students in the 2004 assessment were higher than their male counterparts, but the gender gap showed no measurable difference from the gap in either 1999 or 1971. Predictably, age 17 White students scored higher than African-American students, but the score gap between White and African-American students in reading did narrow. No measurable difference was found between the average score for Hispanic students at age 17 in 2004 and in 1999 (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2004). Interestingly, while the ethnic mix of high school populations in the U.S. has changed dramatically in the past three decades, the National Reading (NAEP) scores remain constant. What does this tell us about secondary literacy practices?

Secondary Literacy in Grades 9-12

While research such as Snow's (1998) work advocating an integrated approach to teaching reading (using both phonics and whole language), and Stahl and McKenna's (2006) work on phonics instruction and fluency-oriented reading instruction have made significant advances in understanding the abilities young children must acquire to develop beginning reading skills and the conditions under which they are most effectively taught, very little evidence is available on how these abilities are best acquired and taught during adolescence. If the literacy demands of adolescents are going to be met, emphasis needs to be placed on teaching adolescents to comprehend and think critically about many different kinds of complex texts, both print and non-print. Adolescents need to be taught how to comprehend and think critically about the textbooks found in the classroom as well as texts on the Internet, including interactive communication sites such as chat rooms, blogs, and social networking websites such as MySpace, Facebook, and Friendster. While researchers continue to suggest various strategies and transmission

models that could be used to increase adolescents' literacy, there is little empirical research to guide school-based practice (Roblyer, 2006).

While the variety of information available today demands a high level of reading skills, the current research base on 9-12 school literacy practices is insufficient to guide teacher preparation and, as already suggested, school-based practice. Without a robust, research base, we have an incomplete portrait of literacy practices in grades 9-12, but several nationally recognized scholars have contributed to the existing base. Notably, Alvermann (2001; 2003; 2006), Beach (2005; 2006), Moje (2000), Kamil (2002) and many others continue to research and publish on secondary literacies and the connections between adolescents' in-school and out-of-school literacies. The general conclusions reached by many of these researchers focus on the need to embed literacy instruction in the regular curriculum and include a variety of print and non-print, canon and popular culture texts in a variety of learning situations and to "extend and elaborate on the literacy practices they [students] already own and value" (Alvermann, 2001, p. 25). While a consistent, robust research base could be used to guide school-based practices, for varying reasons, blended and/or naturalistic studies documenting literacy practices are few in number.

Secondary literacy practices vary across Georgia schools, but grades 9-12 literacy practices often follow the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). Unfortunately, these standards are so general as to be deemed insufficient—or, for the upper grades, nonexistent. The GPS reading standards for Grades 9-10 English language arts can be found in the sections entitled "Reading and Literature" and "Reading Across the Curriculum." No reading standards are listed for Grades 11-12 English language arts. While the standards do require students to read and analyze a number of different texts (various genres and modes of discourse), to read across the curriculum and learn from reading (vocabulary and compre-

hension), there are no specific standards to teach the act/art of reading. None of the state standards "attempts to define explicitly the degree of complexity a specific grade-level text should have..." nor do they address text complexity (ACT Inc., 2006, p. 7; Georgia Department of Education, 2006). The standards do not specifically define the expectations for reading achievement, and students often "are not being asked to meet specific, rigorous reading standards" during their last two years of high school—a "time when it is crucial for them to continue refining their reading skills" (ACT Inc., 2006, p. 3). With the insufficient or nonexistent GPS Standards, it not surprising that many high school teachers are not teaching reading skills or strategies, or that many students are victims of teachers' low expectations (ACT Inc., 2006, p. 4). These grim findings along with the consistent recommendations by scholars citing the need for secondary literacy research have led to a growing awareness that a large percentage of older adolescents' literacy needs are not being met.

Many researchers indicate the need for effective literacy instruction with a focus on literacy being developmental in nature, and suggest instruction is needed for all students, not just striving/struggling readers (ACT Inc., 2006, p. 7). Other recommendations included the need to: strengthen reading instruction in all high school courses by incorporating complex reading materials in course content, including readings of interest to adolescents; challenge students to read texts with a critical eye in order to understand complex print and non-print texts with multiple layers of meaning. This requires sophisticated reading comprehension skills and strategies accomplished by close reading as opposed to a one-time superficial reading; making targeted interventions to help students who have fallen behind in their reading skills; and providing high school teachers with guidance and support to strengthen reading instruction and to incorporate the kinds of complex texts that are most likely to increase students' readiness for college-level reading (ACT Inc., 2006, p. 7; Alvermann, 2001; Harklau, 2001; O'Brien, 2003)

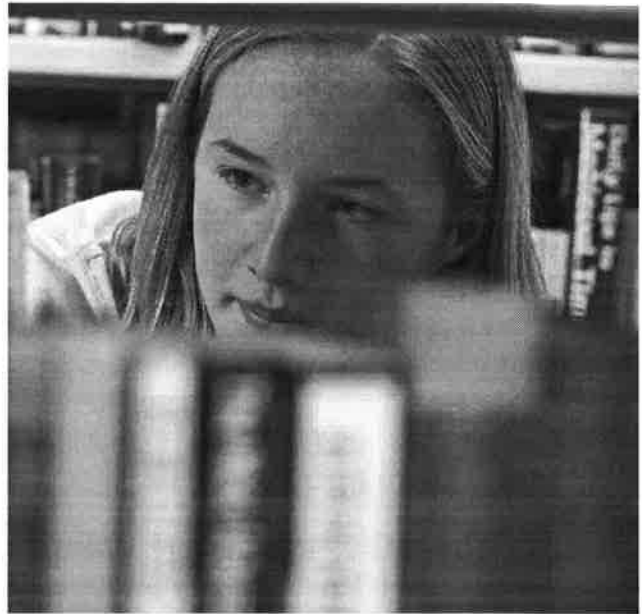
Responding to the need for further research, in 2003 the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) along with other departments in the U.S. Department of Education (2006) funded five multidisciplinary research projects, which became the basis of an Adolescent Literacy Research Network. While many of these projects are not classroom based, they represent a budding national interest in the literacy needs of older adolescents. Details about these studies can be seen on the Ed.gov website (http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hs/adollit_pg2.html).

In 2005, two years after the funding of the OVAE research projects, the Striving Readers Initiative was proposed and initially funded at \$24.8 million. Funding for 2006 grew to \$29.7 million, and \$100 million has been requested for 2007 (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007). As recently as March, 2007, eight grantees from eight different states were announced, but project details are not yet available (see <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/StraightAs/Volume6No7.html>). The findings from these studies, when available, will contribute to the existing research base and represent progress toward a guide for school-based literacy practices, but none pertain to Georgia specifically. We in Georgia need to reply to forthcoming calls for the Striving Readers Grants.

Secondary Literacy Teacher Preparation

One of the outcomes of the Literacy Summit was the formation of a research team to conduct statewide research to be able to answer the question, "What does secondary literacy teacher preparation look like in Georgia?" As of now, no reliable studies have been undertaken to answer this question, but some information can be gleaned from university websites. Since the information is incomplete and possibly out-of-date, I use it sparingly.

Based on a very unreliable, rudimentary search, it seems some teacher preparation programs follow INTASC and NCTE/IRA National Standards, but few methods courses (English, Math, History/Social Studies, Sciences) offer



pre-service teachers strategies for teaching reading and/or writing. In at least one university, middle and secondary education pre-service teachers in all content areas are required to take a reading course. At this university, enrollment in an English language arts pedagogy course often is accepted to fulfill the reading requirement. The shortcomings are obvious: reading strategies are often not the main content of the course, and those that are covered are usually specific to reading poetry and other literature. The attitude persists that English teachers and special education teachers (and inclusion teachers) will provide reading instruction, strategies, and remedial assistance to students in need of remediation.

Recommendations

Recommendations from the 2006 Literacy Summit and from research on secondary literacy addressed similar themes. They included the need to:

- use the Reading Consortium to establish a voice and presence for 9-12 literacy in Georgia by getting on the agenda at national conferences, submitting group and individual proposals, continuing work on the statewide research project, and presenting the results of our work.
- empower educators to use students' out-of-school, multiple literacy practices to re-envision school learning, and incorporate

complex reading materials into all high school courses (not just English and social studies) to strengthen students' reading skills throughout high school.

- require all teachers in all courses to teach reading strategies so that students are able to progress from comprehension of simpler texts to comprehension of more complex print and non-print texts.
- use GPS (Georgia Performance Standards) to create classroom experiences that provide opportunities for building skills that our culturally and linguistically diverse students need to succeed in a globalized economy.
- revise state standards so that they both explicitly define reading expectations across the high school curriculum and incorporate increasingly complex texts into the English, mathematics, science, and social studies courses in grades 9 through 12.
- disseminate best practices found in middle schools and high schools achieving positive results to promote similar efforts on a wider scale.
- increase funding for school or district programs that improve high school reading achievement.
- provide resources for professional development opportunities for teachers so that they are equipped to provide the necessary reading instruction in their subject areas and grade levels. (ACT, p. 9).
- provide ongoing professional development for teacher educators and classroom teachers to supplement content area knowledge with discipline-specific discourse structures.
- use nationally-developed research agendas to examine and evaluate initiatives.
- respond to forthcoming calls for Striving Readers Grants funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Conclusion

While there is a great deal of work to do, members concluded the Literacy Summit on an optimistic note by envisioning secondary literacy as it could be. As a group, we envision literacy

that raises standards and expectations for all students. We envision widespread awareness of the importance of literacy strategies for student mastery of content in all disciplines. We envision a recognition that student literacy practices outside school can serve as a bridge to in-school literacy and enhance content area teaching and learning. Finally, we envision the development of school structures that support and encourage flexible, dynamic, collaborative, interdisciplinary literacy practices that reflect real world literacy competencies.

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You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture.
Just get people to stop reading them.

– RAY BRADBURY



The Status of ESOL Teacher Education in the State of Georgia

CATHLEEN DOHENY AND GERTRUDE TINKER SACHS

During the Literacy Summit, a small group of teacher educators from across the state focused on literacy and literacy teacher education for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Presentations of achievement test scores of English Language Learners (ELLs) at the state level mirrored those of ELLs at the national level. Both sets of test scores show evidence of achievement gaps between ELLs and other subgroups of students.

In Georgia, the state achievement test results for the 2005 Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) indicated that ELLs scored lower on tests of reading than all other subgroups of students. In fourth grade, it was reported that 60% of ELLs met or exceeded expectations on the CRCT reading test. Students with Disabilities (SWD) scored higher with 68% meeting or exceeding expectations. When looking at all students who took the 4th grade reading CRCT, 87% met or exceeded expectations. In eighth grade, 39% of ELL students met or exceeded expectations on the CRCT reading assessment, while 50% of SWD met or exceeded

expectations. For all eighth grade students who took the CRCT reading assessment, 83% met or exceeded expectations (GaDOE, 2005). Clearly, the literacy needs of ELL students in Georgia have not been met.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows similar disparities in reading test scores. Data from the NAEP report (2005) indicate huge achievement gaps between ELL students and other subgroups of students. In fourth grade reading, 20% of ELL students scored at or above basic levels. The next lowest performing group of students were those identified as Students with Disabilities (SWD). During the same year, 37% of SWD scored at or above the basic level in Reading. In the eighth grade, none of the ELL students scored at or above basic levels on NAEP reading assessments; 32% of SWD scored at or above basic levels. Based on the test scores of ELLs at the state and national level, the need to examine literacy teacher education in ESOL became imperative.

Following the plenary session of invited speakers at the Literacy Summit, Evelyne Barker, ESOL Program Director at the Georgia Department of Education, facilitated an animated dialogue about key issues in the preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers for ESOL. Group members identified challenges and recommendations for improving literacy teacher education in ESOL.

Five issues emerged as needing further discussion. A first issue was the lack of preparation of teachers to teach ESOL at a time when there are unprecedented increases in the number of ELLs in Georgia's schools. A second issue, was the importance of raising consciousness about teachers beliefs and practices with regards to non-native English speaking students and their families, a third issue, was a need for all teachers, especially those in the content areas, to have some professional development to acquire knowledge, skills, and dispositions for meeting the needs of Georgia's increasing ELL population. A fourth issue for meeting the needs of ELL students was strong collaboration among educators that would integrate ELL students into the mainstream of Georgia's classrooms and school communities. Finally, as teacher professional development programs examine how they are preparing teachers to address the education of ELL students, there will be a strong need for a rigorous, longitudinal research agenda and appropriate assessments to determine the most promising practices for closing the achievement gap between ELLs and other subgroups of students. This paper will now examine each of these central issues in turn. We will end with recommendations by the group for improving not only literacy education, but education in general, for ELLs in Georgia.

Need for ESOL Teacher Preparation in Literacy
Many teachers in Georgia have already experienced an increase in the number of ELLs in their classrooms. There was a 378% increase in the number of K-12 ELLs in Georgia public schools from the 1993-94 school year to the 2003-2004 school year (NCELA, 2004). Increasing numbers of ELLs coupled with their

dismal achievement test scores create many challenges for educators. The first issue of teacher preparedness is of pressing concern. Teacher knowledge has positive effects on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Considering the rising numbers of ELL students in Georgia classrooms and the lack of literacy achievement as measured by the NAEP and CRCT test results, the question of teacher preparedness must be examined. Are teachers prepared to teach ELLs? What does teacher preparation in ESOL look like in institutions of higher education?

In a search for ESOL programs in public institutions of higher education on Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GPSC) website, it was noted that one institution offers certification (a Master's of Arts in Teaching (MAT)) in ESOL. Six other public colleges/universities in Georgia offer ESOL as an endorsement that requires 9 - 12 hours of graduate coursework. Typically, ESOL endorsement programs include courses such as cultural issues, socio- or applied linguistics, methods for teaching ESOL, and/or a course in second language acquisition. Teachers rarely participate in a practicum or field-based experience as a requirement for the ESOL endorsement. Teachers who work in areas where there is a high population of ELLs are not necessarily required to obtain an ESOL endorsement. Therefore, many teachers in Georgia may have had little or no professional development designed to prepare them to work successfully with ELLs.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to mine the data for individual literacy courses in undergraduate programs to determine how extensively ESOL standards for classroom teachers are integrated into the existing pre-service programs. However, further research by the University System of Georgia's Reading Consortium is underway to examine these courses more closely. There is research that

¹ It is estimated that by 2030, approximately 40% of the school age population in the United States will be ELLS (Dept. of Education, 2002-2004).

suggests that undergraduate teachers in some teacher preparation programs do not feel well-prepared to address the literacy and learning needs of ELLs (Cartiera, 2005).

Critical Examination of Beliefs and Practices

With the increasing numbers of ELLs in the state of Georgia (378% increase from 1993/4 – 2003/4, NCELA, 2004) and with the projected increases for the entire country by the year 2030' all education professionals across the state need to be engaged in dialogue to welcome these students into our communities and classrooms. While there is a need to prepare more teachers to work with ELLs, our group also concurred on the need for consciousness raising and training for in-service teachers across the state on ESOL issues and pedagogy. Teachers' beliefs, values, ideologies, and frames of reference impact their teaching (Boyd, Ariail, Williams, Jocson, Tinker Sachs, McNeal, Fecho, Fisher, Healy, Meyer, & Morrell, 2006). Teachers' attitudes and perceptions about foreign immigrant families and ELLs in the schools is an important part of professional development for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Multicultural education is needed to raise awareness of the many issues and concerns that must be considered when teaching students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Traditionally, when waves of immigrants move into communities, the members of the old community have several options: ignore, resent, or embrace them. There is no denying the changing demographics and the numbers of foreign language speaking African, Asian, Spanish, European, and other immigrants who are moving into Georgia. With an estimated 85-90% of the teaching force being monolingual Caucasian women and men (Synder & Hoffman, 2002), a mismatch between the cultural diversity of school students and the teaching force may exacerbate a history of racial tensions in the United States and Georgia, in particular. Therefore, a concerted effort needs to be made on the part of all stakeholders, particularly educators, for collaborative discussions about what it means to educate increasing numbers of

foreign language speaking immigrants of different ethnic and cultural groups.

As much as possible, culturally and linguistically diverse students should be physically and socially integrated into the mainstream of school and classroom life rather than regulated to the periphery in trailers away from the main classroom buildings, for example. When ELLs are included into the school and classroom culture all students benefit from the diverse strengths and resources they bring.

While many of the educators in our group lamented the negative attitudes that exist in some school and community environments towards immigrants, our group members unanimously endorsed a pedagogy of hope (Freire, 1970; 1998) by emphasizing the strengths of having diverse groups of learners from all over the world in our communities and in our schools (Nieto, 2002). In general, in-service professional teacher development seminars and all teacher education courses need to address the attitudes and perceptions of educators towards minority groups of immigrants who come from different social class, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

All Educators are Teachers of ELLs

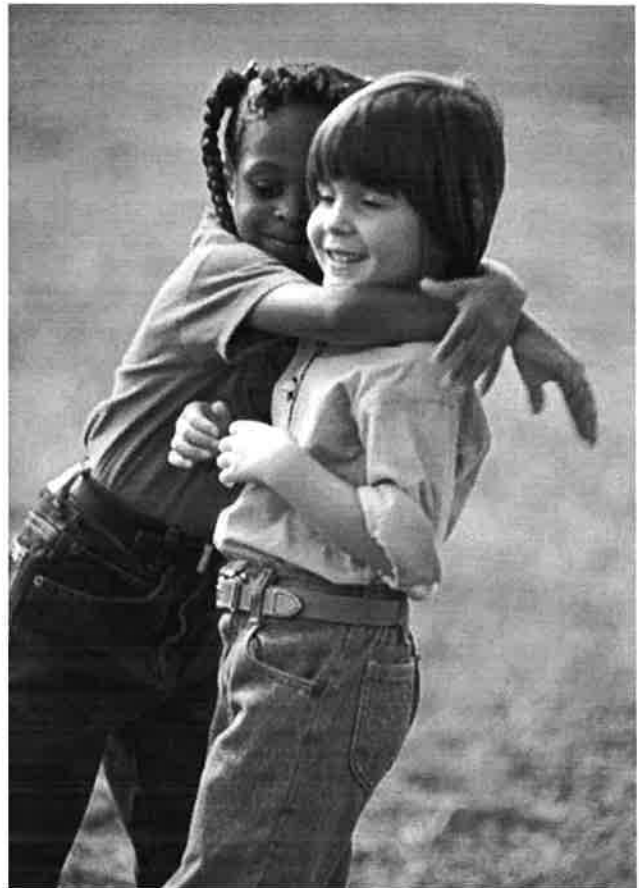
Literacy learning is not the only issue that was raised in our small group. There is also the issue of teaching academic content areas and English language skills simultaneously. For this, all teachers need further professional development. Just as educators and researchers in the 1970s and 1980s called for all teachers to see themselves as teachers of reading, it is crucial that teachers from all levels and of all subjects see themselves as responsible for the education of ELLs. When all educators recognize themselves as teachers of ELLs, the school as a community becomes more dedicated to supporting ELLs in the best ways possible.

Content area teachers need to be concerned about understanding their roles in helping the immigrant learners acquire strong linguistic competencies in English. The job cannot be left solely to those who teach or have been trained

to teach ESOL. According to Cummins (1984), academic language (CALP or cognitive academic language proficiency) is difficult to acquire and takes a long time to develop (5-7 years). While immigrant students might appear to be using English proficiently for social purposes (BICs or basic interpersonal communication skills), their academic language proficiency sets them apart on all school tests and reading materials. The ability to use English in a social way does not imply that ELLs can use English to learn and to demonstrate what they have learned. It is important for content area teachers to be sensitive to the dual load of learning English and subject matter content at the same time. Professional development for teachers must address the strategies and skills that content area teachers should employ when teaching ELLs. The ESOL endorsement programs should provide in-depth training in addressing language in the content areas for teacher education candidates. In-school workshops and professional development seminars should likewise enhance teachers' understandings, strategies and skills in providing an education that affirms and extends the existing language skills that ELLs already possess.

Collaboration Among Educators

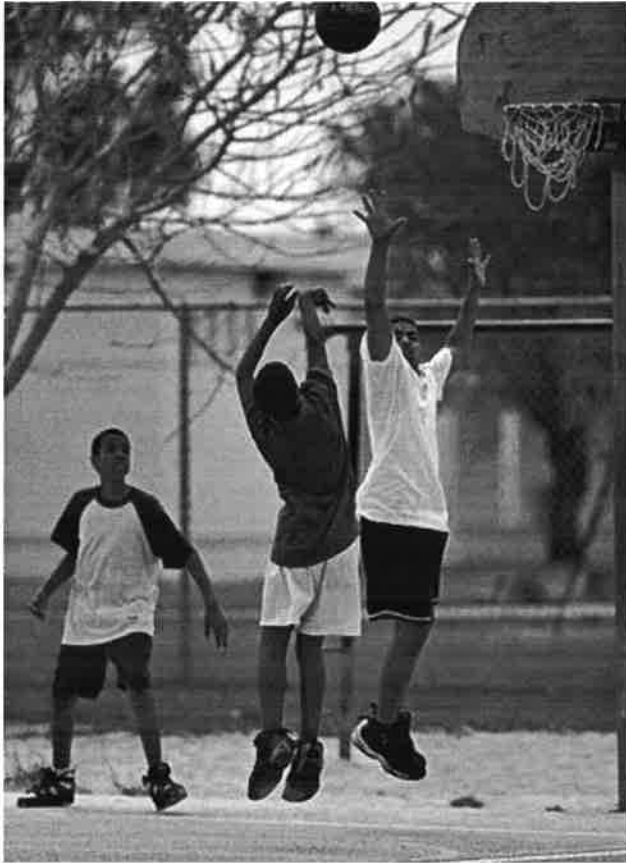
The expansive educational needs of a linguistically and culturally diverse student population can not be met by teachers in isolated classrooms using a narrowly defined curriculum and a deficit view of learning and language differences (Pinkos, 2007). The traditional structure of isolationism in schools is not conducive to successful learning for ELLs. Participants in the ESOL group of educators agreed with the recommendations of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) that meeting the needs of ELLs will demand strengthening collaboration and coordination among federal, state and local programs. In addition, collaborative teaming among administrators, teachers, and parents is critical. ELLs can benefit from a welcoming community of support in which all teachers work collaboratively to plan, teach, and assess content standards and English language competencies of ELLs



(Pinkos, 2007). Snell & Janney (2005) and others have written extensively on the benefits of collaborative teaching and learning for teachers and students. Information on collaboration is abundant in the research and literature in education. What is not pervasive in actual school settings is the structure and support for truly collaborative teaming among highly qualified teachers to plan for, teach, and assess individual student learning. Knowing how to collaborate is a far cry from knowing what to do in schools to create conditions where effective collaborations occur as a matter of course and where students benefit from the combined knowledge of many informed professional perspectives. Collaboration is especially important among ESOL professionals and content area professionals who need to develop differentiation strategies as they make accommodations for developing ELLs' academic language and skills.

The Need for More Research and Valid Assessment

A final area of concern that our group discussed



at length was the need for more research and the dearth of culturally appropriate ways of assessing ELLs. With the increase in ELLs across the state, many educators often feel woefully inadequate as they strive to understand what to do and how best to meet the needs of these learners. Our practices need to be investigated by teachers and educational researchers to ensure that we are adopting the best models possible for the development of pupils' multimodal literacies. At present, schools employ many different models in working with ELLs. These models may range from *push-in*, where groups of ELLs work in the regular content area classrooms and are supported by an ESOL professional to *pull-out* where the ELLs are withdrawn from a regular class for small group instruction with an ELL professional. We also discussed the sheltered model which many schools practice. In this model, the ESOL professional may teach both language and content area in a modified push-in or pull-out version or as more commonly done, the classroom teacher makes accommodations to

the content and delivery of the instruction by collaborating with the ESOL and special education teacher. Accommodations may take the form of modified content and/or the use of differentiated instructional strategies. In these different contexts, how do we know what is working from what is not working? How do we begin to identify best practices within these educational models? How do we describe these practices to our teachers-in-training and help to accommodate them in adopting these models as they strive for excellence in teaching? Only rigorous research in these areas can help us begin to answer these questions.

As a follow-up to the Literacy Summit in the summer of 2006, another one-day retreat was held on "Integrating language and content for ESOL/Title 111" at the Marietta Conference Center on November 3 of the same year. This gathering was convened and facilitated by Dr. Evelyne Barker of the Georgia DOE. In attendance were educational professionals from different school, universities, and education sectors from across the state. At this meeting, the participants examined a draft document on several models for facilitating the instruction of ELLs. These modes of learning included the push-in and pull-out types mentioned previously and a range of immersion models such as: total immersion in an English medium class; dual immersion where students are instructed in both their home language and the target language, English; and partial immersion where ELLs study in English classes for a certain number of instructional hours and then spend the remainder of the day working in their home language. While the success of these models depends very much on the skills and training of the teachers who are involved, they also need to be investigated in depth before sound recommendations can be made as to which models are more appropriate for the different school contexts in the state of Georgia.

When considering the proliferation of testing in schools with the enactment of legislation for No Child Left Behind, educators at all levels must be very concerned about how tests affect not only

the performance of linguistically different students but also the emotional and psychological scars that result from testing in a language in which they are not necessarily proficient. Students in Georgia are at present subjected to several tests including the home language survey to determine whether they are qualified for ELL instruction or not, the CRCT for academic achievement, and the ACCESS to determine their language proficiency and whether they are eligible or not to exit their ELL program. Many schools in Georgia have been designated as low performing schools that have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) because of the presence of large numbers of ELLs and their weak performance on the CRCT. While some politicians and community members might deride the school administrators and teachers for failing these children, the validity and reliability of certain tests needs to be questioned by concerned educators. Again, only further detailed investigations by teachers and educational researchers can help us ascertain which tests are the most valid and reliable for assessing linguistically and culturally diverse student populations.

Recommendations

Recommendations for teacher education in general and literacy teacher education in particular seem to impact all five issues that were addressed in this paper. To improve ESOL pre-service and in-service teacher education in literacy, examination of teacher beliefs and practices, teacher preparation in general for ELLs across grade levels and disciplines, collaboration among stakeholders, and an agenda of rigorous research to identify effective practices for increasing success of ELLs in our schools, the group members made the following recommendations:

There needs to be a concerted and collaborative effort among stakeholders at the state, regional, district, and local educational agencies to examine existing pre-service and in-service professional development programs and courses in literacy to identify when and how literacy teachers are learning ESOL standards for teacher quality as identified by TESOL (2003)

and as presented in the TESOL position statement on teacher quality (Board of Directors, 2003). TESOL standards include the following:

- High level of written and oral proficiency in English
- Knowledgeable about research and best practices in
- Applied and socio-linguistics
- Second language acquisition
- Language pedagogy
- Literacy development
- Curriculum and materials development
- Assessment
- Cross cultural-communication

There is a need to increase the number and availability of high quality ESOL degree programs and endorsement programs for all teachers across the state to create a cadre of professional educators who can work together to improve the literacy learning, English language, and academic learning of ELLs in all of Georgia's classrooms and school communities. Collaboration among highly qualified professional educators must become a reality so that students can benefit from the concerted effort of several teachers working together to plan, teach, and assess their individual needs and offer developmentally appropriate practices (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005).

Along with our group members' recommendations, we endorse many of Whitney's (2005) ideas for teachers working with culturally different and immigrant populations as well as the recommendations made by the Conference on English Education (CEE) Leadership and Policy Summit held in Atlanta in May, 2005 (see Boyd et al, 2006).

1. Teacher, Educate thyself – as with African American Vernacular English (AAVE) speakers, teachers in general, and teacher education programs in particular, need to attend more than a single multicultural course or professional development seminar to understand the needs of immigrant groups of learners and how best to help them. As Whitney (2005, p. 65) states, "one of the biggest obstacles that teachers of

linguistically diverse students face is ignorance.” Teachers therefore need to develop instructional skills, strategies, and models of teaching and learning which accommodate the linguistic and socio-emotional needs of learners. Teacher education programs need to make these strategies and skills integral to all their courses, not just a select few.

2. Incorporate multiculturalism into the classroom - this means more than paying lip service to the ideals of social justice, educational equity, and diversity. Incorporating multiculturalism means infusing the literature, histories, and cultural resources from diverse cultures into our teaching and affirming the cultures of the students and groups within our communities in our classrooms. Again, this first starts in the teacher education programs which our teachers attend.

3. Affirm the linguistic resources of our students – this means allowing the home languages of immigrant students a place in our classes as they develop multimodal literacies in English. Many of the students come with skills in speaking and writing and thinking in their home languages and valuing these skills as resources will help to build their second language literacies.

4. Become advocates for underserved students in general and immigrant students in particular - as advocates for and models of social justice and equity, educators must work actively to address the inequities and injustices that they see taking place in our schools and society and which prevent all students from having access to the best education that is possible (Boyd et al, 2006).

5. Acknowledge that teaching is politicized by our ideologies and frames of reference - we need to question our practices and our beliefs. Are they in the best interest of our learners? Are our ways of thinking based on dominant cultural practices and beliefs that exclude multicultural and multilingual communities (Boyd et al, 2006)?

Conclusion

As August and Hakuta (1997) suggest, recommendations begin with increased political interest, legislation, and adequate resources and support for investigating the five issues identified in this paper as well as emerging issues as challenges increase. The coming together of teacher educators to address ESOL concerns was a very important undertaking for establishing a common ground on the status of our state in issues affecting our ELL learners. From here we can formulate a plan for improving the quality of our teacher education programs as well as ways in which we can meet the needs of practicing teachers. We find promise in the discussions that were held and we look forward to collaborating with all the ESOL stakeholders as we strive to develop promising practices that serve to promote the development of a large segment of our population. Just as there is promise in some of the new ventures being undertaken by the DOE such as the replacement of the Quality Core Curriculum for ELLs with performance standards and assessment based on the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment framework (WIDA, 2007) and the family support programs that are needed in many of our schools, teacher educators need to continue to find ways to investigate and share their best practices and improve the general delivery of teacher education programs across the state.

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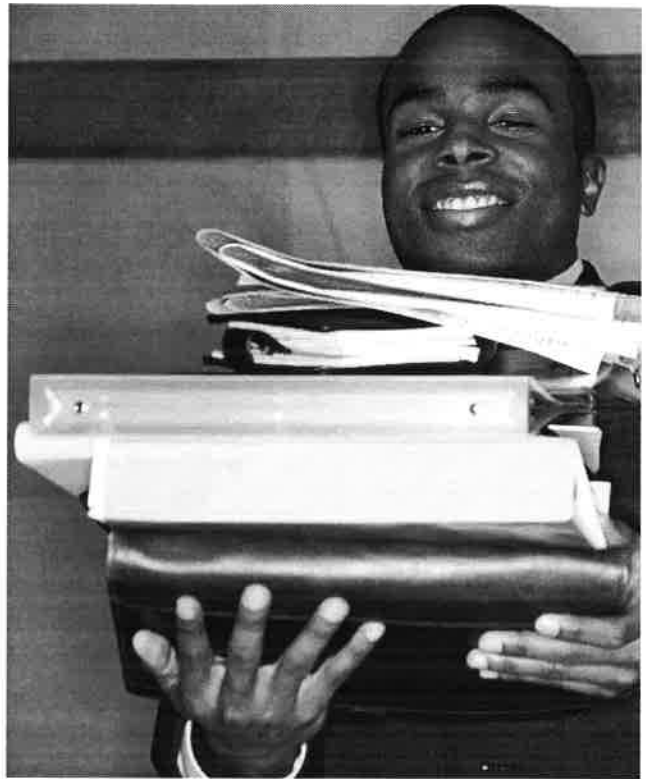
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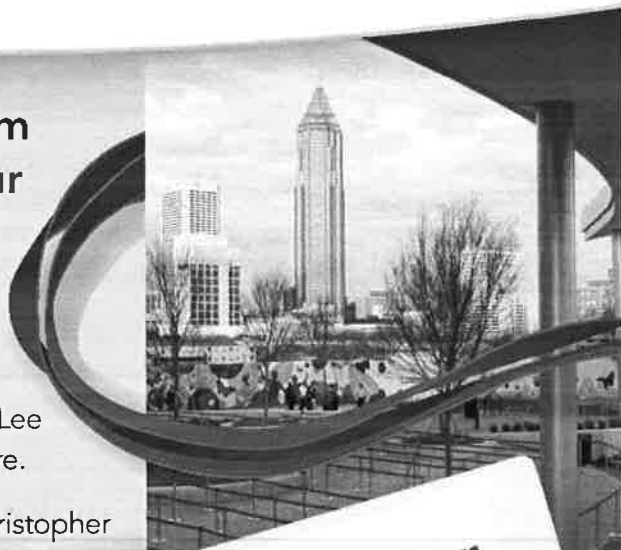
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