Students with Literacy Difficulties: Same and Different

anne.bayetto@flinders.edu.au
Today’s Brief Focus

- Listening and Speaking
- Reading and Viewing
Students With Literacy Difficulties

• Many students very aware of what they cannot yet do
  – Some may read beyond expectation because of interests
  – Students with intellectual disabilities can become more literate

• Need…
  – Cognitive level tasks
  – Explicit instruction for their working level
  – Dignified access to a range of texts
  – To speak, listen, and read more
Literacy Development Is About…

• Cognition
• Metacognition
• Affect
  – We want students to be engaged, involved, and to have secure self-efficacy
• “In school…reading gets linked to a zig-zagging alternation between empowerment and anxiety… [that] can last a lifetime” (Jacobs, 2011, p. 147)
Same: Knowing Students

• Away from school
  – What do we know about our students’ interests?
  – How do we make connections with our students’ interests?
• At school
  – How are our students smart?
  – How does what we do at school align with what we know about our students?
Same: Opportunities for…

• Broad, rich learning related to mandated curriculum
• Engaging with aural, visual, print, and digital texts
• Expanding general knowledge
• Wondering
• Developing “…the charisma of an independent mind” (Young, 2016, p. 2)
# Literacy: Learned, Used, Taught

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(Gross, 2013)
Same: More Listening and Speaking

• **Listening**
  – Until students can read connected text, they learn most of what they know by listening and viewing

• **Speaking**
  – Engaging in speaking is how students can expand their own language skills
• NY Times: 192 questions for discussion (and/or writing)
Same: What’s Going On in This Picture?

http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/?s=What%27s+going+on+in+this+picture%3F

• What’s going on in this picture?
• What do you see that makes you say that?
• What more can you find?
Same: Artist a Day

http://artistaday.com
Question

• What listening and speaking activities have you used/seen used that had students engaged and involved?
• Morning Talks/Show and Tell?
Same: Why Would I Want To Read?

• The primary motivation is to know and share
  – Wondering, anticipating, exploring and mattering (Coiro in Micklos, 2014)
• Whim (Jacobs, 2011)
• “Reading affords experiences” (Young, 2016, p. 12)
Same: Teachers Who Read Professionally and Read for Pleasure

• We cannot promise what reading affords students after they leave school
• We cannot sell what we do not do (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012)
• We must practice what we preach
  – Modelling and sharing enthusiasm about our own literate lives
Same: Increased Opportunities for Viewing

• Len Unsworth
• Jon Callow
Same: Engaging With Visual Texts

- Silent Book Contest
- 2016 winner
  - Pantaleo, Marta (2016). *Goodbye Toys.*
    http://www.silentbookcontest.com/winner.html
Same: Dedicated School Librarians

- Themselves voracious readers
- Knowing a lot about a range of texts
- Recommending texts
  – *I thought of you*
- Talking less and allowing students to read and talk more
Same: Large Class Libraries

• Seven texts per Foundation student
  – Add one more text for each year at school
    (IRA, 2000; Micklos, 2014)

• Broad range of text types
  – Students need appetite and diet
    (Harvey in Szymusiak, Sibberson, & Koch, 2008)

• Building class libraries
  – Second-hand shops, council library sales, garage sales, fetes, instead of a birthday cake donate a book (with nameplate!)
Same: Read-Alouds Every Day

- Affords students more unusual words than conversations between Uni students
- Fiction and non-fiction

Same: BIG 6

- Whole class and needs-based groups
- Oral Language
- Vocabulary
- Phonological Awareness
- Letter-sound Knowledge
- Comprehension
- Fluency

Same: Lesson Structure

• Apprenticing students into what adult readers do
  – Two-thirds
    • Teaching students word recognition and comprehension strategies
  – One-third
    • Leading students towards lifelong reading practices by teaching them how to select and appraise texts, thinking about authors and text content, and building reading stamina (Miller, 2011, 2014)
Same: Not Just Reading Levelled Texts

• Can only be PART of reading instruction
• Can only be a guide
• Stages offer more scope for moving in and out of texts
  – Beginner (1-2)
  – Emergent (3-5)
  – Early (6-11)
  – Transitional (12-17)
  – Extending (18-23)
  – Fluent (24-30) www.oup.com.au
Same: Talking About Texts and Authors

- Students thinking and asking questions of text
  - Fading out interrogation and strip-mining of content (Carr in Jacobs, 2011)

- Re-reading texts just like re-listening to music…

- Dialogic reading
  - Prompt student to say something about the text
  - Evaluate student’s response
  - Expand student’s response by rephrasing and adding information to it
  - Repeat prompt to make sure student has learned from the expansion

Adapted from http://www.tarpits.org/sites/default/files/Dialogic%20Reading_Tar%20Pits.pdf
Same: Independent Reading

• Leisure Reading: International Literacy Association, Position Statement (ILA, 2014)
• Opportunities for reading self-selected texts with discussion, observation, and record keeping
• What about Sustained Silent Reading?
Same: Teachers Who Are Assessment Literate

- Gathering triangulated information to inform decision-making about what students need to learn next
Same: Less Work with Paraprofessionals

https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/making-a-case-for-teacher-aides

• …negative relationship between amount of TA support received and progress made by pupils in mainstream primary and secondary
• …results not attributable to… characteristics, such as… prior attainment or SEN status, …[or] decisions made by TAs
• …it is the way schools and teachers deploy and prepare TAs—factors that are out of TAs’ control

Adapted from http://maximisingtas.co.uk/research/the-diss-project.php
Different: Students With Literacy Difficulties

• We teach students; not programs
  – Avoiding ‘shiny object syndrome’
• Intervention sessions
  – Students with learning disabilities may need different ways of accessing texts
    • www.speld-sa.org.au
    • https://www.ldaustralia.org/
  – More frequent sessions
  – More time actually spent reading
    • Worksheets
  – Weekly/fortnightly monitoring of progress
  – Do students ever exit intervention? (Moats, 2014)
References

http://maximisingtas.co.uk/research/the-diss-project.php


International Reading Association (2000). *Making a difference means making it different*. 


