

# What Is Reading Workshop?

This *SLM* column asks innovative thinkers to share what they're reading on identified topics and recommend them to others in education. Feel free to download the online version (<http://www.schoollibrarymonthly.com/pdf/ERdetail.pdf>) and share it with your classroom colleagues, administrators, and board members. Using these suggestions is yet another way to show your expertise and meet the needs of school library stakeholders.

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Reading workshop, often called "reader's workshop" (RW) is a method of reading instruction that prioritizes individual reading levels and authentic texts over reading groups or anthologies. As Kym Kramer says in this issue of *SLM* (pages 38-39),

Within the context of a broader literacy curriculum, Calkins defines RW as a series of reading instruction components that take approximately one hour each class day to complete. Although the order of activities may vary, the daily RW time includes a mini-lesson on a reading strategy, independent reading time, and conferring and coaching time with the teacher. Additionally, the teacher routinely targets small groups of readers who need similar support with specific strategies or guided reading lessons (Calkins 2001, 43-44).

Librarians benefit from being involved in and aware of RW practices. Most RW leaders recommend the development of robust classroom libraries, which can be perceived as competition for the school library. Some librarians may be asked to level the entire school library, which runs contrary to association policies (AASL 2011; ALA 2010). If possible, seek balance: leveled classroom libraries to meet RW's pedagogical needs and unrestricted, unlabeled school libraries to mirror what real-world reading looks like.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS AT THE BUILDING LEVEL

- ▶What resources can the library provide to support RW?
- ▶How will the Common Core State Standards' genre recommendations impact the texts used in RW at various grade levels?
- ▶Are classroom collections ready for Common Core? How can the librarian's expertise in collection development help?
- ▶In my fixed schedule lessons, how can I support RW? What skills can I reinforce?
- ▶How should we integrate digital texts (database articles, Web resources, and/or eBooks) into RW?

## READING RECOMMENDATIONS: ONE LIBRARIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

I have found Adrienne Gear's short, digestible texts to be most helpful, with teacher-friendly language and lessons that can be implemented right away in the school library to complement research lessons. I do not claim to be a reading teacher, but I now feel much better prepared to teach the thinking processes of reading. I love how she breaks each reading skill down into a "reading power" that is like a puzzle piece in a reader's brain. I have created an ActivBoard flipchart (interactive whiteboard presentation) that shows the powers and helps students visualize what is happening in their brains when they read! Try Gear's *Reading Power: Teaching Students to Think While They Read* (Pembroke 2006) and 2008 *Nonfiction Reading Power: Teaching Students How to Think While They Read All Kinds of Information* (Pembroke 2008).

—Susan Landis Eley, Hillside Elementary School, Mount Laurel, NJ

## RW READING LIST

This is a list of professional resources that extends Kym Kramer's article, "Reading Workshop: The School Librarian's Role" (*SLM* February 2012, pages 38-39). Favorites are starred.

- Bomer, Randy. *Time for Meaning: Crafting Literate Lives in Middle and High School*. Heinemann, 1995.
- Collins, Kathy. *Reading for Real: Teach Students to Read with Power, Intention, and Joy in K-3 Classrooms*. Stenhouse, 2008.
- \*Keene, Ellin Oliver, and Susan Zimmerman. *Mosaic of Thought: The Power of Comprehension Strategy Instruction*. 2nd ed., Heinemann, 2007.
- \*Krashen, Stephen D. *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*. 2nd ed., Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
- \*Miller, Donalyn. *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*. Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- \*Routman, Regie. *Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well*. Heinemann, 2003

## REFERENCES

- American Association of School Librarians (AASL). "Position Statement on Labeling Books with Reading Levels." American Library Association, 2011. <http://www.ala.org/aasl/aas-issues/positionstatements/labeling> (accessed November 28, 2011).
- American Library Association (ALA). "Questions and Answers on Labeling and Rating Systems." American Library Association, 2010. <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/qa-labeling.cfm> (accessed November 28, 2011).
- Calkins, Lucy. *The Art of Teaching Reading*. Longman, 2001.