Invigorate your writing instruction

Teach Writing Well
How to Assess Writing, Invigorate Instruction, and Rethink Revision
Ruth Culham

Ruth Culham knows how to teach writing well: First read students’ writing, assess it using the traits of writing, then guide students’ revision decisions using traits as a common language and map. Here she shows you how to do it, too—and see results.

Part 1 walks you through the traits of writing and their key qualities, showing step by step how to read students’ writing and offer feedback that nudges them forward through the revision process. Part 2 dives into instruction, offering specific advice for how to use what you’ve learned from reading the writing to design lessons that scaffold students toward making their own revisions. An entire chapter devoted to mentor texts gives real-world examples you can use to model traits and key qualities for your students.

Traits-based revision lies at the heart of this book, as it’s been at the heart of Ruth’s career in writing instruction. Rethinking revision is what will ultimately help you to teach writing well.

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*Mary E. Styslinger*

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Guided by a multitude of teacher voices, student examples, and useful ideas, workshopping teachers explore a unit focus and its essential questions through a variety of reading workshop structures, including read-alouds, independent reading, shared reading, close reading, response engagements, Socratic circles, book clubs, and mini-lessons (e.g., how-to, reading, literary, craft, vocabulary, and critical), as well as writing workshop structures comprising mentor texts, writing plans, mini-lessons, independent writing, conferences, writing circles, and publishing. This book is for every teacher who has struggled to make beloved classic texts relevant to today’s young readers.

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May 2019
Critical Literacies
In this issue, we seek Feature Articles and Perspectives on Practice submissions that grapple with the meaning and enactment of critical literacy education in these times. Within this particular social, historical, and political moment, what does it mean to you to be a critical literacy educator and/or researcher? Across rural and urban spaces, across economic and racial divides, what role do you see the language arts playing in supporting students in valuing multiple perspectives, taking an inquiry stance, and pursuing social action? How are the young people you are working with (re)defining what we mean by “critical” and “literacy”? What materials (e.g., children’s books, social media, “fake news” stories) and pedagogies have informed and/or supported your efforts to build students’ critical capacities? How are new theoretical frameworks addressing the intersectionality of identities, embodiment, inequities, and/or emotion (re)shaping our understandings of the purposes and practices of critical literacy? Please join us in crafting a vital collection of articles that speak to the complexities, challenges, and promise of critical literacies within the language arts.
Submission deadline: May 15, 2018

September 2019
Engaging Families in Language Arts Learning
For this issue, we seek Feature Article and Perspectives on Practice submissions that explore the participation of families in language and literacy learning. How are definitions of families changing, and in what ways does this impact our understandings of family engagement in literacy learning? What is “family literacy” and how might it be viewed differently by parents, guardians, teachers, schools, and librarians? How can teachers, schools, and librarians reach out to all families in new and different ways while drawing on their “funds of knowledge” to support and enhance their children’s language arts learning? What roles can families play in supporting their children’s literacy learning? For instance, seminal studies of early readers demonstrated the significance of families and the home environment in helping young children learn to read before entering school without having had any formal instruction. What recent studies build upon this scholarship? How are family literacy practices evolving in the digital era in which we live? Should family literacy programs support language arts learning for family members and children simultaneously? What theoretical frameworks attuned to racial and linguistic diversity, asset-based pedagogies, and social class can help us envision more culturally responsive family literacy engagements and programs? Are there particular literacy practices teachers have implemented (e.g., writing suitcases, collecting family stories) that lead to increased engagement with the language arts for children and their families? Join us in putting together an issue that will give us much to consider in regard to engaging families in language arts learning.
Submission deadline: September 15, 2018

July 2019
Viewpoints and Visions
For this unthemed issue, we invite Feature Article and Perspectives on Practice submissions that offer a variety of viewpoints and visions related to language arts across multiple settings and modalities. What topics, concerns, or issues do you think are important to today’s readers of Language Arts? What kinds of theoretical lenses have you applied to your inquiry work to increase our collective understandings of language arts instruction? How does your research illustrate the range of ways in which young people are engaged with the language arts? What trends do you see in the field of language arts? What innovative literacy practices do you see in the diverse spaces of classrooms and community settings? Within a digital age, how are our understandings of children’s literature, writing instruction, and literacy learning shifting? These are just a few of the many questions that can be explored in this issue. Join us in crafting an assortment of articles that helps to expand our viewpoints and visions about language arts.
Submission deadline: July 15, 2018
November 2019

Viewpoints and Visions

For this unthemed issue, we invite Feature Article and Perspectives on Practice submissions that offer a variety of viewpoints and visions related to language arts across multiple settings and modalities. What topics, concerns, or issues do you think are important to today’s readers of Language Arts? What kinds of theoretical lenses have you applied to your inquiry work to increase our collective understandings of language arts instruction? How does your research illustrate the range of ways in which young people are engaged with the language arts? What trends do you see in the field of language arts? What innovative literacy practices do you see in the diverse spaces of classrooms and community settings? Within a digital age, how are our understandings of children’s literature, writing instruction, and literacy learning shifting? These are just a few of the many questions that can be explored in this issue. Join us in crafting an assortment of articles that helps to expand our viewpoints and visions about language arts.

Submission deadline: November 15, 2018

January 2020

Multimodal Literacies

In 2005, NCTE framed its Position Statement on Multimodal Literacies with a question from William Kist, asking, “Has there ever been a time when we have not been awash in a remarkable torrent of symbols and opportunities for reading and writing them?” More than a decade later, teachers, researchers, librarians, and policymakers are continuing to grapple with expanding definitions and practices of multimodal literacies. Across PreK-8 classrooms and in community-based programs, we see incorporation of the arts, music, and drama into literacy education as well as expanding definitions of texts to include the written, digital, visual, and the embodied. As children navigate multiple modes (visual, aural, gestural, etc.) across an increasingly diverse set of digital and social media platforms, many teachers have created educational contexts responsive to the range and variation of children’s multimodal literacies. In this issue, we invite Feature Articles and Perspectives on Practice submissions that explore multimodal literacies. Some questions you might consider include: How are you incorporating multimodalities into your teaching? What are you noticing about how young people read multimodal texts (e.g., picturebooks, graphic novels, ebooks) and create multimodal texts (e.g., podcasts, comics, digital stories)? In what ways are you assessing students’ multimodal compositions? How are you striving to capture and represent the complexities of multimodal literacies within your research? What are promising theoretical frameworks that we can draw on to understand and illuminate children’s multimodal composing processes? In what ways can multimodal literacies help advance equity-oriented and social justice pedagogies? Join us as we craft an issue responsive to and reflective of the multimodal nature of literacy. Due: January 15, 2019

March 2020

Readers, Reading, and Responding

For this issue we seek Feature Article and Perspectives on Practice submissions that explore the nuances, complexities, and practices of children responding to a range of print, multimodal, and digital texts. We ask you to consider whether and how modes of response have remained the same or developed in the many years since foundational reader response theorists such as Louise Rosenblatt, Richard Beach, Lawrence Sipe, and Judith Langer encouraged teachers to value readers/texts/contexts while fostering literary understandings. What current pedagogies, theories, and studies build upon or complicate this earlier reader response criticism? Some questions you might consider: How do teachers, reading specialists, literacy coaches, and librarians decide the importance of responding to texts in their classrooms or other teaching contexts? What are you noticing about features or genres of diverse series and/or multimodal texts that evoke specific responses from readers? In what ways have educators considered or negotiated tensions between asking students to engage in “close readings” versus interpreting texts from experiential, cultural, social, or other stances? What emerging theories of response incorporate the intersectional nature of student characteristics of race/ethnicity, class, gender, development, geography, etc. within the meaning-making process? Beyond reading and writing, how are the arts, music, dance, drama or other modalities viewed as ways of responding in classrooms and other out-of-school spaces? How might studies of response help us to better understand or advance children’s racial literacy, critical literacy, agency, introspection, and awareness of social justice? Join us in putting together an issue that will give us much to consider in regard to broadening our understandings of the many ways youth respond to texts. Due: March 15, 2019

Language Arts, Volume 95, Number 4, March 2018