Reading is what girls do (Understanding boys as readers and writers). We need to understand and appreciate the developing characteristics and behaviours of individual boys in a variety of literacy situations, and recognize the effect of gender and social issues on their developing literacy lives.

My father only reads the newspaper (Providing literacy models for boys). We need to ensure that boys have male literacy models in their homes, in their schools, and in their community, so that they will associate reading and writing activities with other boys and male adults in their lives.

I would rather watch television (Constructing a reader). We need to understand how a reader is constructed, what factors affect a boy’s literacy development, and how a boy could see himself as a literate member of society.

We never get to choose the books in school (Giving boys choice and ownership in their reading). We need to provide boys with a wide variety of resources that they want to read and at different reading levels. To do this requires rethinking the place of the literary canon in boys’ literacy development and bringing the boys outside reading inside school.

This computer is running out of memory (Acknowledging the impact of computer technology on boys’ literacy). We need to accept the literacy revolution brought on by the computer and information technology and help boys become discriminating and critical users.

Helping Boys Become Print Powerful (I will never learn to read). Providing support for boys who are at risk in literacy. We need to provide direct instruction and appropriate resources for boys who are non-readers or limited readers so that they can fully enter the literacy world as proficient readers and writers.

This book is too hard! (Letting boys in on the secrets of proficient readers). We need to share with boys the strategies that proficient readers use to make sense of difficult texts or unfamiliar genres or formats.

I don’t know what this story is about (Helping boys to deepen and extend comprehension). We need to encourage boys to make meaning when they read by connecting the text to their personal experiences and feelings, to other texts, and to past and present world events.

All we do in school is read and write (Creating a viable literacy structure for boys). We need to create a structure for literacy that connects boys’ homes, schools and outside worlds, so that we can motivate and support boys in becoming independent and proficient lifelong readers and writers.
Assisting Boys in Becoming Writers (I don’t know what to write about).
Helping boys to develop writing topics that matter. We need to develop authentic reasons for having boys write, so they will value opportunities for writing for a variety of functions and for different audiences. We need to help boys find reasons and methods for revising and editing their written work, and then offer them ways of sharing the final drafts.

Guess what happened to me? (Helping boys to share and shape stories from their lives).
We need to promote the recalling, the sharing and the shaping of boys’ life stories as useful resources for reading and writing.

Can I be in the play? (Drama as a source for reading and writing).
We need to develop drama units in which boys can express and reflect upon their ideas and feelings artistically, co-operatively and safely.

Do poems always have to rhyme? (Revealing and understanding emotions through poetry).
We need to incorporate poetry into the literacy lives of boys to open up reflective and emotional responses, and to demonstrate the power of language.

Does Spelling Count? (Helping boys in building word muscles).
We need to find effective teaching strategies for developing spelling and sentence strengths in boys’ written projects, so that they see themselves as competent writers.

Structuring Literacy Events for Boys. (Can you show me how to do it?).
We need to model and demonstrate specific literacy strategies so that boys can learn the secrets of how successful readers and writers work.

How can I find out? (Recognizing inquiry as a central motivation for reading and writing).
We need to recognize inquiry as the basis for drawing boys into authentic reading and writing activities using different genres of non-fiction resources; we also need to provide opportunities to build upon their interests in informational and instructional modes as resources and topics for writing.

How am I doing? What do I do next? (Demystifying the assessment and evaluation process).
We need to develop assessment strategies and use evaluation procedures to enable boys to recognize their strengths and uncover their problems. We can then design useful instruction for supporting their literacy growth.

Building a Literacy Community (My mother wants you to phone her).
Connecting the home and school worlds of every boys so that parents and caregivers can work alongside the school in supporting literacy for all children.

I don’t like any of these books (Building literacy and literature resources for boys).
We need to find resources for all kinds of readers, from beginning readers to gifted, mature readers, and for readers with different language backgrounds and interests.
The Rearview Mirror
In my son’s kindergarten classroom 25 years ago, the teacher had one computer, and each child was assigned to that centre once a week. Jay awaited his turn with great anticipation, and reported back to me each time on his success with the activity. No five year old in that class felt they lacked computer resources; it was a significant part of the program.

Compare this situation to my graduate class this summer: there were 30 teachers enrolled in the course called New Literacies, many of whom carried their laptops to class each day, and took notes on them while I taught. As part of the program, we spent time each day in the computer lab, participating in interactive workshops on a variety of programs, searching for specific research papers that featured information on the topics, sharing YouTube films that explored similar issues, and preparing their final course projects that had to include a component from the multiliteracies world now available to them. The experience with technology varied in the group, from newcomers to wireless experts, but everyone grew in both the medium and the content they were exploring, especially me. I had developed this particular course so that I could connect to the world my graduate students inhabit more and more, and they carried me along with them. (I even joined Facebook.)

We need to look at the role of technology in the classroom, its effect on the curriculum and teaching practice that we have developed and honed over the last five decades, and its impact on how we will engage with our students in every subject discipline.

What does illiterate mean in the twenty-first century? I cannot read efficiently many different forms of texts - manuals, schedules, guitar magazines, sheet music, and almost anything with numbers in it. I want the students we teach to know the possibilities that rich literacy processes can tap into so they can alter their futures, see the world from different viewpoints, construct their own ideals, transform their world pictures, own their lives, resist manipulation by corporations or governments, find pleasure and laughter and satisfaction in all types of texts, feel worthy as readers who make important choices, risk and fight for valued beliefs that will benefit all, be awake to the imagined possibilities that surround them. We aren't what we read; we read what we are, and what we can become.

As teachers, we are confronted with the pragmatics of teaching literacy every time we meet our students. Are we using inappropriate texts with our limited readers? Are we beginning formal literacy teaching too early? Are we so bothered by disruptive behaviours so that we ignore the miscreants? Are we losing too many boys and many girls because of our choices of suitable literacy experiences? Do we assess, and then not use the information to build our
teaching methodologies? Are there not enough support personnel to help us? Are government curricula too rigid, too complex, and too numerous?

Effective teachers enrich their programs with texts that are useful for the youngsters, different from their standard reading materials, while at the same time building opportunities and respect for the resources that are "owned" by the students. I think its a matter of negotiating the literacy territory, recognizing that every student has a right to read what he or she wants to read at some time during the day, but, as wise parents and teachers also know, we require the strength to ensure that the students experience texts that can change their lives in different ways, texts that make them laugh and cry, novels that portray lives so like or unlike their own, articles about science and geography and health that move them further into ideas and issues.

We know how to open these other complex genres to the interests of youngsters; we know that the culture of the classroom can determine the attitudes and behaviours of our students, and if we create a place for all types of texts, experienced and shared in engaging and significant ways, we can enlarge the literacy sphere of every student we meet. As teachers and librarians, we have magical powers that parents lack: they are weighed down with hopes and expectations and dreams and responsibilities and the demands of daily life, quite different from our professional approach to education in the widest sense.

That is why school can be such a powerful force in teaching literacy: we have a built-in community for exploring our text-generated ideas. We bring our own life needs to every experience with text. When we explore a text we have met, when we respond to it through the medium of discussion, writing, role-playing, or art, we add to our understanding, we alter our perspectives, we create a new text that lives alongside the original, adding to our grasp of the issues or the people we began to explore. We change ourselves as we re-think, re-tell, or re-imagine the original text. We re-read it again, and we find it has become a whole new experience.

Young people need not only to inhabit the words and images, but to see themselves as performers of what they have learned, representing and owning the learning. In effect, they become the literacy event. And they read and write with the whole self, with the body, with the emotions, with their backgrounds as child and friend and student and citizen. They sit in school beside their family members, and they read every text they meet alongside them, inside their cultural surround. Literacy is constructed through identity.

What really matters is that we help our students to see each text form as significant: there can be no exercises in reading that hold little or no significance for their lives. What students are asked to read must lead towards understanding, so that they come to see engaging with texts as worthwhile experiences. Reading in school means that students need to be confronting a variety of text
forms with passion and excitement, discovering as much about themselves as they do about the text. We want as many connections happening as possible - before, during, and after reading - so that they associate the text forms with their own constructs of the world. We need to teach our students what an act of literacy means, and we need to model our own attitudes and behaviours as we work alongside them.

Today, as educators, we have come to understand that there are multiple literacies: we recognize the variety of ways to make shared meaning in our lives-language, of course, (both oral and written), music, art, dance, and all the symbol systems. For young people today, learning will require opportunities to explore meaning-making with many of these forms, and in new combinations of them, such as the visual text literacies found in their electronic, computer-filled world. There is not one definition of literacy since literacy practices are multiple and shift, based on the context, speaker, text, and the function of the literacy event. (e.g. doing a Google search).

Even our definition of the term text has gone beyond the traditional acts of reading and writing using an alphabetic code or symbol system, to include digital technology, images, sounds and oral discourse. Now we refer to a text as a medium with which we make meaning through a variety of modes that are written, visual, tactile, oral (e.g., an audio book, a magazine, a painting, a film, a computer screen, narratives, information, lists, opinions, persuasive editorials, poetry, songs, scripts, instructions and procedures, graphic texts etc.).

Our definitions of reading and reading instruction are changing. And how we see the world changes as a result. The “New Literacies” are profoundly shaping the ways in which we view and use language. Just as the telephone altered communication strategies, our students will encounter a wide and perhaps unthought-of variety of information and communication technologies. Just think of video cameras, web editors, spreadsheets, list serves, blogs, Power Point, virtual worlds, avatars, and dozens more. Our traditional way of thinking about and defining literacy will be insufficient if we hope to provide youngsters with what they will need to be full participants in the world of the future. Our youngsters will require technological expertise in their home, work, and civic lives. They will need to be plugged in (or wireless) for survival.

**Technology and Literacy**
Everyone I know working in the areas of education and literacy spends hours each day reading and writing on the computer, yet often celebrating the book as the most important centre of the student’s world. Some schools have one computer at the back of each classroom, while others have a computer lab down the hallway; some have a trained librarian with print and computer resources to assist teachers, and others have a laptop computer for each student and a SmartBoard for the teacher. Schools are trying to give their students
opportunities to become computer-literate, to learn about technology but more important, to use technology to support and enhance their own learning events.

Now we have youngsters at all levels working with word processors, chat lines, blogs, emails, text messages, web searches, Photoshop, etc. And all of these activities are literacy events. Boys and girls are reading, and especially writing, more than ever in the world's history. But what we can consider is the quality of the literacy events they are engaging in, the kinds of learning processes they are exploring, and what languaging options they may be minimizing, or even missing.

The disparities between the plugged-in or wireless electronic home and the traditional school contribute to the alienation many students feel about what goes on in their classroom. How can we build on their digital literacies as we re-conceptualize how we could teach reading and writing in ways that would help them to value the intertextuality of the many different literacy experiences in their lives? We can be plugged in at times, and still gather together and sit in a circle, to listen to a tale 2,000 years old. In 1992, there were fifty websites. As I write this, there are hundreds of millions. The texts that students read and enjoy at home are print and electronic. Our choice of texts in the classroom needs to reflect the multi-modality seen on the web and in CD-ROMs to appeal to students' reading behaviours. Yet computer use can be balanced by programs involving print resources that connect the students to the worlds they inhabit, while at the same time stretching their abilities and interests. We can include novels, biographies, poems, columns, and articles that represent the best writers we can find who will enrich the lives of our students. Resources that touch the emotions and the intellect have a much greater opportunity for moving readers into deeper frames of understanding. Aesthetic knowledge lets us see further and sense the “as if, the hallmark of thoughtful, mindful citizens", as the education philosopher Maxine Greene puts it.

Literature or Literacy

Many people are confused about the difference between literature and literacy. The first definition of literature in the Oxford Dictionary is "written works, esp. those whose value lies in beauty of language or emotional effect." Too many parents and teachers regard only novels, poetry, and so-called literary non-fiction as literature. We have made many boys and men think that they are not readers because they don't happen to choose one of those genres. They may choose to read other kinds of texts, from The New Yorker to Sports Illustrated, both of which include the work of very fine writers, and, of course, many novels are not necessarily labelled as literature.

The literature canon for youngsters has not altered much over the last forty or fifty years. The same novels are used throughout most school districts in North America, without much awareness of equity or gender issues, or whether young people are being prepared for a life of literacy. They are often read and analyzed chapter by chapter, with too little attention paid to the impact of this teaching
strategy on reader choice and on the future literacy lives of the students. But reluctant readers tell us they want action, raw humour, familiarity, and complex illustrations; in contrast, teachers prefer elegance of story structure, sophistication of character development, complexity of description, irony, and references to other literature. What if these readers could find themselves engaged in a powerful book they couldn't put down? What would change in their reading lives? Would they forget their reading difficulties and simply read? Many teachers are able to find the right books for those students who are at a difficult stage in their reading lives.

Fortunately, books and screens will co-exist for the near future. Book people are strong-willed proponents of the paper-print media, and technology will continue to expand as young people are born wireless. But students will need teachers, librarians, and friends to promote and provide choices to extend and enrich their literacy options with different texts, along with time and places and opportunities for adding new ones to their crowded lives.

Linguistic and cultural differences offer us a wealth of opportunities, an enrichment of possibilities. Literacy is a foundation of citizenry in any language, a right of freedom. As we recognize the complexities of society's issues, we see the need for reading at the deepest level, for recognizing the shades of grey between black-and-white extremes. Are those who read only minimal text in any form or format susceptible to control by corporations, unethical political leaders or charlatans? An informed citizenry requires competency in different text forms.

Since literacy is now defined as more than a matter of words on a page, the exploration of the media, computers, television, film, magazines, and so on has been seen as an integral part of the learning continuum. Students of all ages need opportunities to be critical viewers to ensure that they become media literate. We have to consider the effect of these media and their influence on the thinking, reading, and writing proficiencies of children as we develop our school curriculum. Viewing - the observing process - is an essential component of communication. The technology of the future will bring an ever-increasing flow of visual information, which students will need to learn to comprehend, analyze, and apply to new situations. The critical strategies that we hope to develop in students as they interact with print are just as necessary when they interact with television, film, and communications media brought to us by the computer screen, or technologies yet unknown and undeveloped. Therefore, listening and viewing are vital elements in any literacy program.

Today's students are savvy about a much broader range of texts, both print and electronic, than we ever were. Their texts have video, animation, hot spots, and, in their world, the written word has been extended by the visual and the tactile. What we need to ask ourselves is, "What kind of dispositions do our children need as they enter school today?" What is clear from looking at modem
communication is that our visual landscape has dramatically changed over the past two decades.

With the digital environment, our students are thinking, exploring, connecting, and making meaning, often collaboratively. Students have the amazing potential of taking advantage of vast global networks, huge databases, immense archives, rich art collections, and interactions with millions of users. Many classrooms have already left behind the teacher as expert notion where the students are expected to digest, memorize, and regurgitate. We are moving toward classrooms as environments where students living in the Information Age are encouraged to develop flexible and inquiring frames of mind as they sort, sift, weigh, and arrange ideas and construct new concepts. In our complex world where simple answers, basic problem patterns, and memorized solutions are no longer sufficient, students, like all of us, have to shift, change, learn and relearn.

The inquiry-based classroom supports the development of a full range of literacies, as students handle the unexpected and the unfamiliar as well as the predicted and the known. Our students must create answers rather than collect them. In an environment filled with opportunities for reading, writing and discussing, students create their own rich web of related questions that help them organize and structure their investigations and develop their emerging understandings.

Technology does not necessarily improve the acquisition of literacy in and of itself. It requires carefully crafted learning programs focused on creating dynamic opportunities for the interpretation, manipulation, and creation of ideas in the classroom. The rapid development of the Internet is a little like a gold rush - some miners found earth and not gold. We need to help students skim and scan enormous amounts of information, to select and organize what may be useful or significant, to critically examine the information for authenticity and bias.

Current research supporting the use of computers in the classroom has been overwhelmingly optimistic. Many students find the computer a liberating support for writing and researching, (and reading), and they often develop a more positive approach to learning. The development of a sense of purpose, understanding the connections between their work and the real world, a willingness to rework ideas and drafts, sharing with peers, using higher level thinking skills, and developing more complex problem-solving abilities are all areas of growth for the students. One of the great appeals of computers for students is that they are intrinsically motivating, and students have a great deal of autonomy in their investigations. For many students who have a natural predilection for solitary, fact-based activities, working on the computer is a natural and comfortable tool for learning.

Of course, we need to move then beyond this rudimentary use of the technology to the higher order thinking - collaborating and creating opportunities that
technology makes possible. We need to be aware that computer use may affect development in areas that buys should and need to cultivate, such as collaborative learning and creating a meta-awareness of texts they read. We need to help students to be active and critical in their use of multimedia, and vigilant that they do not get lost in cyberspace or incorporate inaccurate or incorrect information into their written work.

Students today think of themselves as programmers, as interface designers when they read and generate texts on the computer. They interweave such modes as written text, sounds, animation, and video to enhance their assignments. Computers can also be used to visualize abstract concepts or to solve problems. As a result, we can no longer view the texts we use during literacy teaching as primarily written or linguistic - they are made up of images, of sounds, of movement, just as the texts that students read and enjoy at home are print and electronic. Students who are living inside the new technological literacies need to see the role of these digital movements in shaping the world they live in. Technology is part of a larger set of social relationships.

It is important to note that girls and boys may come to technology in different ways. Although girls have narrowed the gender gaps in math and science, technology remains dominated by boys. Girls consistently rate themselves lower than boys on computer ability, while boys exhibit higher self-confidence and a more positive attitude about computers than girls do. Boys use computers outside of school more often than girls. Just as many boys prefer resources (books, magazines, websites, etc.) that favour facts over fiction, they respond to the Web, which contains an endless frontier of facts on all manner of topics, and many boys respond to the factual and multimodal (written, image, sound, animation) nature of the Internet.

Technology provides an ideal vehicle for boys to become more acquainted with literacy and being literate. In the online world, they can safety play around with technology without worrying about their image. For both boys and girls, computer skills should pivot more on building and designing than on being passive in relation to technology. We need to create new spaces for thinking of literacy in terms of the multimodal nature of texts that students read, use, and produce.

Jennifer Rowsell, an authority on The New literacies, speaking at a literacy conference, noted, "We have witnessed our students' steady mastery of such standard practices as clicking, cutting and pasting, creating and updating Web pages, and even writing text codes. These practices are so tacit to their lives that they hardly give them a second thought. Practices such as these have been psychologized by our students and have become fundamental to the reading and writing process".

Communication technologies used as tools for learning assist students in doing research, seeking and analyzing information, creating new insights and ideas
and applying what they learn. Technology can foster success for all learners. This desired outcome depends upon learning through knowledge construction in real-life situations. Students want more relevant, authentic learning experiences, and real-life situations are infinitely more possible, on an ongoing basis, in a rich technology-supported learning environment where students read, write and discuss as they problem solve using wide-ranging texts, real data sets, simulations, and visual representations.

If we incorporate popular and contemporary texts that interest young people through the content and style, and if we develop their literacy strategies, they may approach and participate in the reading of a wider variety and complexity of texts. Of course, we must both provide them with highly motivating selections and structure supportive opportunities for reading and discussing them. We want to open and increase the options these students will have for including literature their lives, on line and on screen.

Future Directions
I confront my own assumptions and biases along with colleagues, about how we can help teachers who feel like visitors arriving in the new world without knowledge of the language or the geography. Are we frightened or excited by the technology? Homesick for the reading nook… or full of adventurous spirit? Are we railing against the wireless connections, clutching our book bags… or putting a new battery in our digital mouse? Or all of the above some of the time? What if we, as readers, have been part of the journey all along, but unaware of all the new directions we were taking? Have we been involved with technology in unknown ways? How do we define technology? How will we redefine a book? And just what will or should our children experience in the future under the category of children’s Literature? And will the text we love smell of library paste or light up in the darkness? We may need to ask Alice in Wonderland for some answers.

We know that the students' engagement with text can be extended and deepened through response activities, and that these can incorporate the multimodal forms that surround the children in their lives as they explore the author's content, structure, and forms by interpreting, constructing, and representing their own ideas and emotions in a variety of modes. The children then become the text makers, expressing and sharing their constructs with others so that their texts beget other texts. We might call these new forms informal children's literature, as we recognize the power of the peer creation as a force for literacy in the classroom. Children are then developing an awareness of how different texts work, from the inside out, learning that all the new forms are a valuable resource in developing their own interpretations, their narratives, their newfound information, or their word play. After all, a crayon is certainly a technological tool, whether it be a wax Crayola or a mouse-driven colour brush on screen.
In any golden fantasy of a past literature-enriched life, we paint our significant others holding books, but these texts were never just fiction even in our imaginary utopias. They have always included books of information, biography, travel, cooking, religion, and pictures; magazines and scrapbooks; poetry anthologies; and collections of love letters from loved ones in our home country. Could these print texts not be seen on screen, in small battery-powered book-like devices that we hold as we lie in our beds, lulling us to sleep, just as a paperback does now? For many of us, the feel of a book is too powerful a sensation to forego with a plastic replica, but for the young, that is what they may know as reading material.

No longer does the word "reader" stand on its own. I need to know how readers place themselves in the worlds they are constructing. What resources are they surrounding themselves with? How are they becoming aware of world events, of the reasons for our behaviours? How do they find out? Who helps with the choices that confront them? What makes them laugh and cry? What stories cause them to reach out? Which songs will they memorize so that they can lift their voices with the choir? What are they reading and watching and listening to? What does it mean them? And how are they being changed? or comforted? or frightened? or made stronger?

**Helping Boys Move Towards Literacy**

How can we help students to monitor their own reading comprehension? Traditionally, we have assessed their reading after they have finished reading, instead of helping them to become aware of what is happening as they read, when meaning making is interrupted, or when they lose track or become confused. Even excellent readers have times during the reading when they find themselves lost or their mind wandering. We all need strategies for repairing a breakdown in understanding during the process of reading, so that we don’t just plough on to the end of the selection totally confused with what we are reading. Worse still is waiting for someone to tell you about what you thought you had read. Instead, readers have to monitor their understanding and attempt to repair the breakdown in meaning making. If they just continue trying to read without fixing the difficulty, problems just accrue like dirty laundry. Often oral reading practice in a group results in little or no comprehension for limited or struggling readers as they wait their turn and focus only on pronunciation. What, then, are some signs of reading breakdown that we can teach our students to notice and to modify?

*There are too many hard words in the selection, and I am giving up.*

Generally speaking, if there are more than five difficult words on a page that the reader can’t readily solve, the text is too difficult. Readers need to find a simpler version, or to do some prework with the ideas, the words or with the structure of the text. It seldom helps to look up a number of words in a dictionary before reading, but finding information on one or two important terms may help the reader to understand other words in
context. Often a discussion before reading can present the students with enough background and terminology to make meaning with the words. Of course, efficient readers know to omit a difficult word or to flag it until they have read further and have more information to bring to recognizing it.

*I can’t remember what I am reading about.*
If a reader can’t retell part of what has just been read, then he/she has to go back and take stock of the text, review the purpose for reading, do some more prework on the text, or reread what has gone on before. There is little sense in continuing when you have lost your way. Stop and retell what you remember so far, or consider what has happened.

*I don’t care what I am reading about.*
The reader has lost the purpose for reading the selection. There is no interaction with the author or the text. Instead of questioning the ideas on the page, arguing or wondering about the content, the reader has stopped interacting with the print. It might be useful to begin predicting what could happen next, and then rethink and revise your guesses as you find out more information.

*I am thinking about something unconnected with the text.*
All readers shift back and forth between the print and other ideas unrelated to the text. But the proficient reader recognizes this wandering, and attempts to connect with the ideas in the text by connecting it with events in life.

*I am not finding answers to the questions that I ask as I read the text.*
The reader needs more background or clarification about the text before the meanings can build. If our questions begin to pile up as we read, we need to step back from the text and find a stronger orientation to what we are reading. Good readers learn to preview the text they are about to read, to notice its organizational structure, its format, how it fits in with their past reading and life experiences. In that sense, they can read what they already know.

*I can’t find any visual images from the text.*
If the reader can’t make any pictures from the words in the text, then meaning has been interrupted, and the mind is not imagining what the words are creating. It takes practice to paint mental pictures from the text, but as the reader becomes more adept, the ideas in the text grow clearer, and new connections can be made with the reader’s background experiences.

*I read it but I have no idea what it was about.*
By using some of the strategies they have explored during the year, students could become aware of their difficulties as they reread, and work towards handling the confusion. Should they highlight information that puzzles them? Do they need to jot down questions that arise as they read? Should they reread the introduction or the blurb on the back cover? Do they need to check a difficult term in the glossary? Do they need a brief conference with the teacher to get them back on track? Can they begin to make connections with the text as they read, relating other background experiences, both in print and in life, to this text?

*I am afraid to recognize that I can't understand what I am reading.* By ignoring or disguising their confusion with or a breakdown in their reading, or by not monitoring the problems with meaning making with a text, students can’t make decisions about their comprehension problems and strengths, and can’t learn how to bring themselves back to making sense with their reading. The first step is isolating the difficulty and selecting a strategy that can help. Sometimes writing down a response or a summary of what has been learned so far helps clarify the direction the text is taking.

*I never skim or scan to find main ideas or important facts; I never adjust my reading rate.* Often we need to scan the text to get the gist of it before we read the specific passage, or skim a page to find the point that connects to what we have just read. Readers need to understand the structure of text, to note any features that might help in understanding—captions, marginalia, summaries, etc., and then bring that information back to their reading. As well, it often helps to slow down the reading rate, to say a piece of dialogue aloud, to listen to the line of a poem as you speak the words. Similarly, you can read more quickly when the description is wordy or the information already familiar.

We need to help children stay on top of their reading, keeping tract of how well they are understanding what they are reading, detecting obstacles and confusions that derail understanding, and understanding how to repair meaning when it breaks down. When something doesn’t make sense, or a problem arises in our understanding, experience readers slow down, reread, clarify confusions, checking for understanding, and move to repair comprehension by accessing different strategies. Some readers simply lose tract of meaning by spacing out, others see no purpose in what they are going to read; others have insufficient background knowledge to understand unfamiliar concepts or ideas, or focus on details rather than on important ideas and information, or maintain misconceptions as they read, clarify confusions, discuss ideas and interpretations, they don’t have enough strategies to select from when handling a variety of texts; they can’t recognize the features of different genres or formats of texts in order to see the underlying framework that will help organize the concepts. We come to
understand that we read for a purpose; we read to affirm, recognize, understand, argue, find out, laugh, weep, and discover who we are, and who we might become. On line, and on page.

Books by David Booth (published by Pembroke Publishers)

It's Critical
Whatever Happened to Language Arts?
Caught in the Middle
Story Drama
Literacy Techniques
Future Considerations
As I confront the new educational changes in my district, and in my school, how will I determine my own professional responses to these new directives, curriculum binders, in-service sessions, technologies, goals, assessments, and of course, the differences in the next generation of children? I don’t want to be found “clinging to the wreckage”; I want to move forward, as Tom Newkirk says, *Holding on to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones*. But those good ideas must be the big ones that matter, so that I rob no child of a future, yet honour my chosen profession as a teacher of young people. I have attempted to represent my top ten list of good ideas:

1. **An enriched environment.** We will need to incorporate satisfying, supportive, and enriching materials in our classrooms, continually building print and technology resources that enable children to grow and stretch as young readers, writers and researchers, helping them to recognize the personal power that literacy success can provide. We need to post relevant materials for the children including their written work, email, important event notices, newspaper articles on topics they are examining, quotes of the day, school and community newsletters, posters, and flyers. We want to encourage children to create word mobiles, murals, collages, and banners. We can take the class on excursions and invite guests into our school. We can incorporate popular culture inside a school setting, but always as texts for exploring, for interrogating, for connecting to other text modes, for constructing, representing and interpreting their own ideas and plans. And novels, poems, information and reports are all texts that matter.

2. **A Supportive Community.** As teachers, we will continue to establish a learning community with the whole class, where children participate in the ongoing literacy life of the classroom, where they come to value reading and writing in all its forms and formats, where they begin to support one another in developing the attitudes and strategies required as lifelong learners, and where we as teachers model and demonstrate the kinds of literacy activities in which we believe. Members of a community of readers and writers talk about personal interpretations and questions related to common themes that, in turn, affect the thoughts of others in the community. We are all changed by each member of the community.

3. **Every Child Matters as a Learner.** We must encourage independent literacy development with each child, supporting every occasion for making meaning with texts of all kinds and types, and offering useful strategies for enabling reading and writing success. We need to recognize a child’s independence at each stage of growth in the journey toward becoming literate, and these may not match the arbitrary grade in which the child is placed. Each child’s response to a text will be unique for a variety of reasons: social experience, gender, cultural connections, including peer group expectations, personal interpretations of words and expressions, knowledge of strategies, relationships with others, and appreciation of the author’s message. We must support ELL students and
incorporate their first-language literacy skills. We must continue to deepen and extend the children's personal responses to texts, encouraging them to make life connections with what they read in order to build critical and appreciative understanding, as well as extend their knowledge of how different texts work. Teachers must have high expectations for each student's success, and support development and learning with appropriate and supportive attention that embraces the student's interests and needs.

4. **The Integration of Reading and Writing.** Reading and writing are closely connected processes of learning. A student who writes down his or her thoughts thinks and reads while composing, revising, rereading, and editing the final product. We can work to connect writing activities to the reading process so that literacy development is strengthened holistically, and children recognize the reciprocity of the processes of reading and writing. We read and write, we comprehend and compose, in every subject of the curriculum. Writing is a complex act, a symbolic system - a means of representing thoughts, concepts, and feelings - that involves memory and the ordering of symbols to communicate ideas and feelings to others. Individual aspects of writing (spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, format, etc.) are important parts of the whole process of writing, and can be focused on and learned through a variety of strategies that remain connected to making meaning with print and image.

5. **A Focus on Word Power.** Building word power in students will be integral to their literacy growth. Teachers need to create opportunities for focusing on phonics instruction through games and activities using words from texts students are reading, as well as increasing sight-word recognition. Instruction in techniques for spelling is vital for their development as writers. We can focus on building word power for reading success, increasing each individual's bank of sight words, offering useful strategies for recognizing unfamiliar words, and sharing the delight of linguistic word play.

6. **A Variety of Flexible Groupings.** We can create fluid groupings and regroupings of children for different reading and writing events so that their needs and interests can be met in a variety of teaching/learning situations, enabling children to move forward in their reading development as they gain confidence and competence, and encouraging them to share their experiences with one another. With opportunities for literacy development as individuals, as part of a small group, through mini-lessons, and as part of the community as a whole, Children can be immersed in a world of words-listening, discussing, exploring, experimenting, reading, rereading, and writing.

7. **Sharing and Presenting Results of Inquiries.** The context in which a reader finds himself or herself may determine the nature of the literacy event. Reading a science report to a group differs greatly from presenting the results of a significant inquiry to the whole community; a teacher
listening with interest to a child’s findings differs greatly from an outside observer conducting an assessment. Offering different modes for sharing projects and inquiries, and providing an awareness of registers and their accompanying changes in vocabulary and syntax, provide important opportunities for learning in children. We can extend opportunities for children to be seen as the experts in our classroom through their careful representation and sharing of their inquiries.

8. **A Repertoire of Literacy Strategies.** We can continue to help children discover and incorporate effective comprehension and composing strategies when interacting with or constructing different types of text. Demonstrating these during “think aloud” sessions, modeling them in our own demonstrations and mini-lessons, focusing on them one at a time as they arise in response to the students’ work, and drawing them to the attention of the students throughout the different literacy events, will develop a metacognitive awareness of strategic thinking as habits of minds in the students.

9. **Parents as Partners.** We need to communicate and co-operate with parents throughout the school year about their children's literacy development, accepting their concerns, sharing with them significant observations and data, and valuing their support at home and at school in building lifelong learners. A child sits beside each member of his/her family in our classroom, and we need to value them as central to the successful learning we encourage.

10. **An Integrated Ongoing Assessment Approach to our Teaching and their Learning**

We need to monitor, track, assess, and reflect upon the children's literacy progress in order to develop teaching and learning strategies that will help each child grow as a reader and as a writer of different text forms and formats. Strategies for assessing a student’s literacy growth can be introduced and developed in a variety of ways to sustain the interest of the student, increase meaning making, and generate competence in written work. We need to assess and reassess our own program of instruction by continuing to read, write, share, and research as professionals. We need to be aware of the experiences, ideas, and strategies of others, as well as conduct our own classroom inquiries, in order to modify, extend, and revise our methods of assisting our readers.
Planning Checklist for Effective Literacy Instruction

The following strategies should assist teachers when planning literacy instruction for all learners but especially those whose readiness is low in relation to the general skills and specific goals the teacher has identified.

Assessment for Learning

- Have I assessed the student readiness?
- Have I assessed student interest?
- Have I assessed student learner profiles, considering multiple intelligences and learning styles?
- Does my assessment inform my instruction?
- Is my assessment fair and equitable?

Content

- Have I identified the main ideas or concept that I want students to understand at the end of this lesson/unit?
- Are curriculum expectations addressed?
- Have I planned for collaborative and co-teaching?
- Have I sought students' input into the planning process and considered their lives outside of the school context?
- Have I considered antiracist issues and gender issues?

Process

- Have I considered readiness, interest and learner profiles, including diverse life experiences?
- Have I planned for students to access their schema?
- Have I considered cross-curricular links?
- Have I included support staff?
- Have I built opportunities for independent work?
- Have I scaffolded the learning?
- Have I planned for practice and feedback throughout the lesson/unit?
- Does my process allow for flexible grouping?
- Do my work spaces allow students to work in groups, pairs, independently?
- Have I allowed for differentiation based on interest? Ability? Learner profile?
- Have I allowed enough time to explore materials, reflect and share learnings?
- Are there a variety of instructional strategies, reading and writing activities, and hands-on investigations?
- Have I included graphic organizers?
• Are there sufficient interesting, useful, and varied resources to support this unit?
• Have I considered multiple intelligences when planning this unit?
• Do my planned activities reflect the “lifelong learnings” – the essential concepts – I want my students to attain and retain?
• Have I posted reference points around the classroom?
• Are students comfortable and familiar with transition routines and group work?
• Have I established respect for the diverse needs and paths of discovery for all students in my class?
• Do I have a balance of teacher-guided, student-guided, compulsory, and differentiated activities?
• Have I allowed for independent projects?
• Have I planned on using a taxonomy of higher-order thinking for critical questioning and thinking?
• Have I created contracts that allow for goal setting and time management?

Products

• Have I provided clear expectations of the culminating task?
• Does the culminating task reflect the student readiness, interest, and learner profiles?
• Have I built in self-assessment checklists and feedback loops that students can access while creating the final product?
• Are products varied in means of expression, difficulty/complexity and evaluation?
• Have I considered student choice?
• Have I considered possible extensions?
• Have I provided opportunities for student input?
• Have I considered the needs of all my students?
101 Strategies for Literacy Growth

- Babies Need Books Too!
- Read to Your Kid!
- Read with Your Kid!
- Let Your Kid Read!
- Play Board Games!
- Notice Life Print around You!
- Make Tapes with your Kid!
- Read Taped Books!
- Sing Songs with your Kid
- Car Rides Are for Reading!
- Kids Need to Collect Things!
- Find the Patterns in Books!
- Read Pattern Books!
- Read Alphabet Books Together
- Read and Write Letters!
- Read and Write Emails!
- Download Everything that Matters!
- Connect with an E Pal!
- Check References!
- Play Word Games
- Reread to Make Sense!
- Retell to Own the Story!
- Rewrite in your Own Words!
- Scribe for your Kid!
- Create Poems on the Fridge!
- List the Books Your Kid Reads!
- Read Ten Books a Year!
- Read Poems Aloud!
- Read Novels Written as Poems!
- Read Nonfiction that Matters!
- Read every Book in the Series!
- Find Out about Favorite Authors!
- Watch TV & Films Made from Books!
- Attend an Author’s Talk!
- Make Homework Useful!
- Make Templates for Writing!
- Keep Journals or Notebooks!
- Write a Dialogue Journal with your Kid!
- Let your Kid Read the Mail!
- Social Studies & Science are all about Reading!
- Read Manuals to learn How Things Work!
- Practice all Types of Tests!
- Read the TV Guide!
- Read Maps on a Trip!
• Read Aloud to Younger Buddies!
• Read Aloud to Older Buddies!
• Paint and Draw your Stories Too!
• Make Your Handwriting Special!
• Make all Kinds of Books!
• Compare Ads in the Newspaper!
• Read Sections of the Newspaper!
• Read Free Community Papers!
• Read and Write Memos of Apology
• Keep Bulletin Boards!
• Read what your Peers Read!
• Keep Scrap Books!
• Have Fun with Rainy Day Books!
• Make Overheads and Charts!
• Keep a Word Bank!
• Keep a List of Weird Words
• Learn How Words Work!
• Keep a Word Wall!
• Use your own Background for Reading!
• Increase Comprehension!
• Boys Read what They Want to Read!
• Girls Read what They Want to Read!
• Guide your Kid's Reading!
• Read Books Together!
• Read independently!
• Read Connected Books!
• Model Real Reading and Writing!
• Invite a Bunch for Lunch!
• Predict What Might Happen next!
• Summarize as You Read Along!
• Give an Opinion about the Book!
• Skim & Scan When You Need Too!
• Connect Your Life to the Book!
• Connect the Book to Your Life!
• Connect the Book to the World!
• Read Computer Screens Too!
• Find Examples of Effective Reading and Writing!
• Find Out How Text Books Work!
• Use the Writing Process
• Write all Together!
• Fill in the Blanks!
• Illustrate your Writing
• Cut & Paste to Edit your Writing!
• Learn How Spelling Works!
• Punctuate like Crazy!
• Use Grammar to Talk about Language!
What’s Normal for your Kid!
Retention Seldom Helps!
Libraries Are Free!
Schools Can Help!
Read in Holy Places!
Create Time for Literacy!
Own your own Books!
Interview your Kid about Reading!
Book Reports Kill Reading!
Celebrate your Literacy Heritage!
Laugh your Way into Literacy!
Read an Adventure!
Read all about Pop Culture!
Find a Riddle You Can’t Answer!
Read Your Favorite Comics!
Be Proud of your Reading Tastes!
Talk about Everything You Read!
Role Play Characters in a Book!
Value Emotional Responses!
Memorize a Book & Pretend to Read!
Read Scripts Out Loud Together!
Find Out Everything You Can!
Trivia matters!
The new teacher!
School proof your child!
**Suggested Books for Boys**

**Picture Books**
- Big Bear Hug by Nicholas Oldland. Anything by Anthony Browne
- Curious Garden and Children Make Terrible Pets by Peter Brown
- The Lunch Thief by Anne C Bromley 9780884483113
- The Incredible Book Eating Boy by Oliver Jeffers 9780009182312
- Owen by Kevin Henkes 97806887769214
- Rude Stories by Jan Andrews 9780887769214 (Canadian)
- Max’s Castle by Kate Banks 9780374399191 (great)
- Usborne Illustrated Stories for Boys 9780746074619
- Usborne Illustrated Adventure Stories 9781409522300
- Kingfisher Book of Great Boy Stories 0753453207
- Usborne Pirate Stories for Little Boys 9781409522140
- The Jewel Fish of Karnak by Graeme Base 9781419700866
- Enigma: A Magical Mystery by Graeme Base 9780810972452
- Zoom by Istvan Banyai 9780140557749
- Bagel from Benny by Aubrey Davis 9781553377498 (Canadian)
- Little Boy by Alison McGhee 9781416958727
- The Pet Dragon by Christoph Niemann 9780061577765
- Grandpa Green by Lane Smith 9781596436077
- The Amazing Adventures of Bumblebee Boy by David Soman 9780803734180
- Dino Hockey by Lisa Wheeler 9780761349488
- Dino Soccer by Lisa Wheeler 9780761381044
- Dino Basketball by Lisa Wheeler 9780761363934
- Boris Goes Camping by Carrie Weston 9780192789792

**Novels and Series (6-8)**
- Barnes & the Brains series by Kenneth Oppel
- Canadian Flyer series by Frieda Wishinsky
- Roscoe Riley by Applegate
- Horrid Henry by Francesca Simon
- Stink by Megan McDonald
- Geronimo Stilton
- Any Mike Lupica story for boys interested in sports
- Nate series by Lincoln Peirce
- Big Nate series by Lincoln Peirce 9780062060945
- Max Quigley: Technically Not a Bully by James Roy 9780547152639
- The Dangerous Days of Daniel by James Patterson 9780316119702
- Guys Read by Jon Scieszka 9780061963735
- The Hunchback Assignments by Arthur Slade 9781554683550 (Canadian)
- Eye of the Crow by Shane Peacock 9780887769191 (Canadian)
- My Big Mouth by Peter Hannan 9780545162104
- Boom! by Mark Haddon 9780545162104
The Limit by Kristen Lundon 97814424202720
Skulduggery Pleasant by Derek Landy 9780007326013
JOJO the GIANT. Written by Jane Barclay isbn 9780887769764
Marco Polo Murders by Kevin Sylvester(Canadian)
Nerds by Michael Buckley
Pseudonymous Bosch
Squish series by Jennifer L. Holm 9780375843891
The Flying Beaver Brothers by Maxwell Eaton 9780375864476
Frankie Pickle by Eric Wight 97814424213047
Binky by Ashley Spires 9781554535972
Phineas and Ferb (from the Disney TV series) 9781423137405
The Totally Awesome Epic Quest of the Brave Boy Knight by Pranas T. Naujokaitis 9781609051839
Star Jumper: Journal of a Cardboard Genius by Frank Asch 9781553378877
Spaceheadz by Jon Scieszka 9781416979548
Fly Guy by Tedd Arnold 9780545007245
George Brown Class Clown 9780448453705
Martin Bridge by Jessica Scott Kerrin 9781555337977 (Canadian)
Orca Echoes Howling Timberwolves (sports) by Sigmund Brouwer 9781551435480
Stone Rabbit (graphic) by Erik Craddock 9780375854360
Stink by Megan McDonald 9780763628918
How To Blow Up Tollins by Conn Iggulden 9780007304004
Melonhead by Katy Kelly 9780440421870
Alvin Ho by Lenore Look 9780375857508

Novels and Series (9-12)
The Misfits by James Howe 9780689839566
The Strange Case of Origami Yoda by Tom Angleberger 9780810984257
Farticus Maximus by Felice Arena 97814433107921
Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes by Jonathan Auxier 9780670064663
Nerds by Michael Buckley 9780810989856
The Secret Series by Pseudonymous Bosch 9780316040853
A Week In The Woods by Andrew Clements 9780689858024
School of Fear by Gitty Daneshvari 9780316033299
Walking with the Dead by L.M. Falcone 9781553377092 (Canadian)
The Big Swim by Cary Fagan 9780888999702 (Canadian)
Kenny and the Dragon by Tony DiTerlizzi 9781442436510
Ultimate Top Secret Guide To Taking Over The World by Kenn Nesbitt 9781402238345
Herbert's Wormhole: A Novel in Cartoons by Peter Nelson 9780061688706
Nathan Abercrombie Accidental Zombie by David Lubar 9780765325105
The Puzzling World of Winston Breen by Eric Berlin 9780399251986
Hank Zipper by Henry Winkler 9780448431628
Traces by Malcolm Rose 9780753459713
Sports Stories series published by Lorimer (varying authors) 9781552776704
Conspiracy 365 series by Gabrielle Lord 9781443102292
Alex Rider series by Anthony Horowitz 9780142406113
The Luck of Jude by Andrew Larson 9781552777053 (Canadian)
Dust ‘n’ Bones by Chris Mould 97814444906172
The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate 9780062135797
The Game of Sunken Places by M.T. Anderson 9780545138833
And Then It Happened by Michael Wade (Canadian).
The 1 Hundred Cupboards by N.D. Wilson,

**Graphic Novels (9-12)**
'Who Was' series of biographies
Amulet series by Kazu Kibuishi 9780439846813
Bone series by Jeff Smith 0439706408
Big City Otto by Bill Slavin 9781554534777 (Canadian)
Knights of the Lunch Table by Frank Cammuso 9780439903189
The Olympians by George O'Connor
Daniel Boom Loud Boy (series) by D.J. Steinberg 9780448446981
Pokemon and the classic graphic series

**Non-fiction (9-12)**
Explorers Who Made It or Died Trying by Frieda Wishinsky
9781443100106 (Canadian)
Sports Illustrated Kids 9781603201544
Duped by Andrea Schroeder 9781554513505
National Geographic Weird but True 9781426307669
Uncle John's Did You Know? 9781592236824
Horrible Histories series by Terry Deary
WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA by Helaine Becker.

**Teen**
Crabbe by William Bell
Dumb Luck by Lesley Choyce
Just Some Stuff I Wrote by William Bell 9780770429744 (Canadian)
Dust City by Robert Paul Weston 9780143173311 (Canadian)
Full Metal Achemist
Living Outside the Lines by Lesley Choyce
Living Outside the Lines by Lesley Choyce 9780889954359 (Canadian)
Dumb Luck by Lesley Choyce 9780889954656
Word Nerds by Susin Nielsen 9780887769900
Marco Polo Murders by Kevin Sylvester (Canadian),
Nate series by Lincoln Peirce
Pseudonymous Bosch, Nerds by Michael Buckley
All Fall Down by Eric Walters and I've Got An Idea by Eric Walters
And Then It Happened by Michael Wade (Canadian)
This Dark Endeavour by Kenneth Oppel