

South Suburban Reading Council

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Member of the Illinois Reading Council
An Affiliate of the International Reading Association

A Message From the President...

Dear SSRC Members,

I would like to extend my gratitude to all of you who attended our first dinner meeting of the year. I'm sure you agree that Ann Reichel and her expertise allowed for opportunity to reflect on your own teaching and helped many of you realize that you are already doing what the Common Core State Standards expect of you.



On behalf of the Region 5 Councils and Saint Xavier University, we extend our apologies for any inconvenience the cancellation of the conference, "Our Changing World," that was to be held on October 27th at SXU may have caused. We look forward to working with the other Region 5 Councils as well as SXU in the future. Feedback as to whether or not you would be interested in this type of conference and if you would prefer the conference to be held on a weekday or a Saturday is welcome. Please email me at cpiet@sd194.org with your thoughts.

I encourage you to join us at our next dinner meeting on December 4th with Tom Lichtenheld, author of *Duck! Rabbit!*, *Shark vs. Train*, and many more humorous children's books. In the meantime, I recommend visiting www.tomlichtenheld.com for a list of his books as well as corresponding resources to assist in incorporating his books into your literacy instruction.

This year, SSRC is trying something new and is teaming up with Habitat for Humanity to provide a family with bookshelves filled with new books. It is a priority for us not only to bring the excitement of literacy into the lives of our students, but also into the lives of members of our community. For more information about our book drive, please see the attached flyer with details about the family as well as information on how to get entered into a raffle at our next dinner meeting!

I'm grateful to be in a network of people who continuously better themselves professionally and clearly have their students' best interest at heart.

We look forward to seeing you in December!

– *Carrie Piet, SSRC President*

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Kathy's Korner

This feature, which we began last year, offers you an opportunity to ask a question about teaching reading. E-mail your questions to southsuburbanreadingcouncil@gmail.com or visit <https://sites.google.com/site/readingssrc/>.

Sue Asks:

A hot topic in my 4th-6th building is what strategies and tools we can pass on to parents to help them help their student with reading comprehension. What would you suggest?

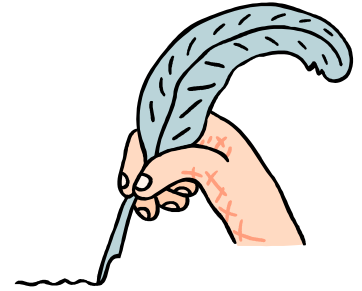
Kathy Answers:

It's great that parents are looking for ways at home to help their children develop good reading comprehension. Here are some suggestions for activities that will increase comprehension when the parents and children are engaged in them together.

- Read a book together as a family and discuss "book club" style
- Cook or bake together using a recipe
- Play board games such as Balderdash, The Log Board Game, Tension, Pointless, 5 Second Rule, One Direction, Scattergories, The Chase, BezzerWizzer (for older kids), or Who, What, Where
- Read and discuss current events from newspapers and news magazines; compare points of view or current to past events
- Read to children and take turns predicting, summarizing, drawing events, characters, etc.
- Retell what happened during the day (develops understanding of narrative style)
- Build background knowledge by visiting places and participating in science and community activities
- Research a topic of interest together; make a book about what you uncovered
- Create a picture dictionary of vocabulary for a specific topic of interest

Karen Asks:

Common Core says to teach students at Lexile levels matched to their grade, but I always was told it was best to teach kids at their "instructional level." What should I do?



Kathy Answers:

Lexile level and "instructional level" are not mutually exclusive. As a teacher, it is your job to use texts for instruction that offer the best opportunities for your students to grow in their ability to read and understand text and to apply the skills and strategies they are acquiring in a supportive environment so they will ultimately be able to do so independently.

The Lexile Framework is a readability formula that measures both text complexity and reader ability on the same developmental scale. The complexity of a text is determined by a number of factors including vocabulary, sentence length and structure, and hidden meanings and complex subject matter. Research indicates that the complexity of what students read does matter in becoming a successful reader. Therefore the Common Core standards expect students to read texts that increase in complexity as they move through elementary and high school so they are prepared for the rigors of college or workplace reading. However, the Lexile reading levels of texts are a guide to their reading ability and not a restriction of it. The range of scores assigned to each grade level is wide enough to allow for texts for struggling readers as well as advanced readers at each grade level and the bands of Lexile scores overlap grades. Students need to read texts at different levels depending on their purpose for reading. Texts used for instruction of reading skills and strategies should allow students to apply what they are learning with teacher support and add to their knowledge of the reading process.

Ultimately, teachers need to use their own professional judgment to match texts to readers and to the skills and strategies to be taught. According to the Standards, "Students' ability to read complex text does not always develop in a linear fashion. Although the progression of Reading standard 10 defines required grade-by-grade growth in students' ability to read complex text, the development of this ability in individual students is unlikely to occur at an unbroken pace. Students need opportunities to stretch their reading abilities but also to experience the satisfaction and pleasure of easy, fluent reading within them, both of which the Standards allow for." (p. 9)

So go ahead and use instructional reading level texts (most will fall within the Lexile band for your grade) for your guided reading texts and provide a wide range of texts for independent reading in your classroom. Your goal is for your students to read independently and proficiently within a given grade band by the end of the band's final year.

SB 7—What Does It Mean for Teachers and Unions?

By Jaime Finklestein

On June 13, 2011 Senate Bill 7 became a public act. The Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT), the Illinois Education Association (IEA), the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) and other groups worked together to keep “educators voices being heard,” according to www.performancecounts.org. Some of the provisions of SB7 include collective bargaining, right to strike, years of experience, new RIF procedures, a streamlined dismissal process, among others.

Senate Bill 7 “retains the teachers’ right to negotiate with their employers and the right to strike,” according to www.performancecounts.org. SB7 also takes “teachers’ years of experience into account”, which includes teacher certification, qualifications, performance and experience. If a teacher receives “two unsatisfactory evaluations within a seven-year period”, they are considered “incompetent” and the State Superintendent can suspend or revoke the teacher’s certificate, according to Senate Bill 7.

New RIF (Reduction in Force) procedures now have “performance tiers” which rank teachers based on tenure and performance. Senate Bill 7 also “requires that RIF notices be sent out 45 days before the end of the school year.” For more information on Senate Bill 7, please visit www.performancecounts.org or www.isbe.net.

Expect More: Children Can Do Remarkable Things

With Dr. Anne Grall Reichel

On Tuesday, September 25, SSRC welcomed Dr. Anne Grall Reichel, who encouraged teachers to embrace the Common Core State Standards, along with their rigor. Dr. Reichel provided engaging strategies to integrate literacy with content areas such as Social Studies, for an authentic learning experience. She explained that by expecting more from our students, and delving deeper into the content, we are better preparing our students to transfer that knowledge. Information from her presentation can be found in Live Binders, here: <http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=568872>.

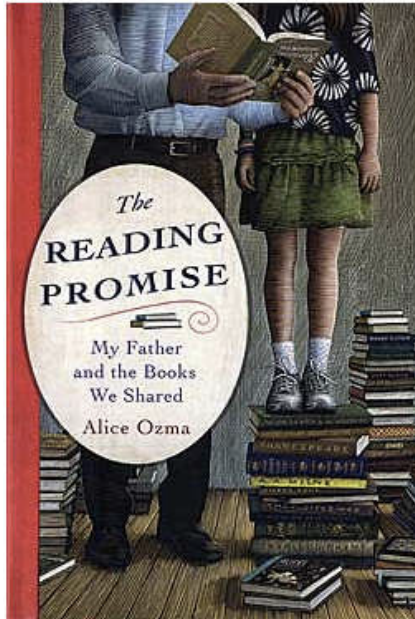
SSRC’s Schedule of Upcoming Events

- ✓ Tom Lichtenheld – December 4 – Silver Lake CC, Orland Park
- ✓ Tim Shanahan – January 16, 2013 – Orland Chateau, Orland Park
- ✓ Jerry Johns – March 6, 2013 – Bourbon Street, Merrionette Park
- ✓ Mari Walther – May 2, 2013 – Scrementi’s Restaurant, Steger

Visit our NEW Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/readingssrc/>

Parents and Reading

By Pam Bartusiewicz



Reading, writing and arithmetic signals that the students are back in school and facing the daunting task of homework! Parents often wonder how they can help their children with their homework. Skill and drill is definitely an option, but the children will not like it. One sure way to help your budding scholar succeed is by reading to them every day. Yes, I mean everyday!

It can be done! Reading to your child brings many rewards. Reading together is an opportunity to spend time together, enjoy a good story, make new friends and visit far away places. I realize there are household chores to be completed, your job as well as numerous details to address every day. But setting aside time everyday to read with your child will bring great riches to your child's life and to yours as well!

You might ask to what I attribute this notion. As a school librarian, I strongly advocate for reading to children, but I was also drawn to this book entitled: *The Reading Promise* by Alice Orma. It is the journey of a father and a daughter who read together religiously and

enjoyed many books. At first Alice and her dad, Jim Brozina made a pact to read for 100 straight days. Once the reading pair completed this goal they celebrated with pancakes. Alice was in fourth grade. Alice and her dad decided then they would read together as long as they could. As reading partners they continued their reading habit until Alice left for college eight years later. That's some commitment!!

This book presents numerous vignettes of how despite various obstacles the father-daughter team read together on a daily basis. *The Reading Promise* lists hundreds of books that Alice and her dad shared. Alice gained a great deal of knowledge from her reading experience with her dad. In eighth grade she was 1 of 3 students out of 300 that ranked advance proficient in the reading section of the state test. As a junior, she had the highest score on the PSAT test. She also won two national writing contests. Alice definitely benefitted from her reading experiences.

At this point you might be asking yourself: "Where am I going to find all those books?" How about making it a weekly ritual to visit the public library and talk to your public librarian. Don't forget to ask your child's school librarian for suggestions. Garage sales, Friends of the Public Library book sales and book exchanges are always ways to obtain books. Books are also great gifts to give and receive.

Another source of books is electronic books. Your public library and your school library are possible sources for you to read books electronically. An electronic source for reading online is the International Children's Digital Library (<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>). This website provides stories from around the world and in several languages. Project Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/search/>) is also available to read books electronically; these titles are in the public domain and in most cases are the classics.

Two print sources to help you find exciting books is *Book Crush for Kids and Teens* by Nancy Pearl and *Read, Remember, Recommend for Teens: A Reading Journal for Book Lovers* by Rachelle R. Knight. Visit your local library for these resources. Happy Reading!

Take the Time to Teach Teachable Moments

By Justin Opiola

I recently told a student that not only am I a teacher, but I am also a cop. After a few seconds of utter disbelief on the student's part, I sounded the sirens and told her that I am an officer for the Grammar Police. Needless to say, there was not a written citation issued. There was no trip to city hall to pay a fee, but there was an understanding by the student. Her teacher was not going to let her *get away* with using improper grammar. In a time where teachers' school days are busier than ever, do not let teachable moments *get away*.

Susan B. Neuman and Kathleen Roskos explain, "A teachable moment is an unplanned opportunity to offer a brief explanation to students. A teachable moment is not something you put in a lesson plan. Rather, it is an occasion that is exquisitely timed to explain a word or a concept that may have inadvertently captured students' collective interest" (2012). That's enough of an explanation for me. If a student is interested in learning, I am interested in teaching. I try to teach students, "Yearn to learn!"

The next step for the sake of this *reading* article is to gear teachable moments toward our ever-so-favorite subject. Let's try the topic of expanding one's vocabulary, or in the case of a classroom, expanding twenty to thirty vocabularies. According to Neuman and Roskos, "In many respects, (a teachable moment) is an ideal time for an informal vocabulary lesson. Generally, the word that is explained is in the students' immediate context. Especially for English learners, the connection between the word and its referent is highly transparent. The context in which the word is used is also likely to help in building meaning" (2012).

Word walls are always looking to recruit quality words. Students are always looking to expand their vocabularies. Teachers are always looking to expand students' vocabularies (that sounds more like it). With that being said, please, oh please, do the word wall a favor, do yourself a favor, and most importantly, do the students a favor, by taking the time to teach a teachable moment. This is your referent signing off until next time.

Neuman, S. B., & Roskos, K. (2012). More Than Teachable Moments: Enhancing Oral Vocabulary Instruction in Your Classroom. *The Reading Teacher*. Retrieved: October 23, 2012, from <http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com>.

DO YOU LIKE FREE STUFF?

How would you like to win a free year of membership to the Illinois Reading Council/South Suburban Reading Council?

If you JOIN or RENEW your membership to IRC/SSRC, you will be entered into a raffle at our next dinner meeting for a free year of membership!

Coming Soon!

For your convenience, we are in the process of setting up an online payment system for dinner meetings.

We will notify you as soon as it is up and running!



Coming Soon!

Tom Lichtenheld

Tom Lichtenheld is a New York Times Best Selling children's book author and illustrator. He doodled his way through school, then worked as a sign painter, set designer, printer, and advertising art director. While working in advertising, he spent his nights and weekends creating children's books. His first book, "Everything I Know About Pirates," was released in 2000, and was selected by *Newsweek* as a *Book of Wonder*.

Tom's total focus is now on creating children's books; his books are acclaimed for their humor, expressive characters, and rich – sometimes hidden – detail. He's known for creating books that appeal to children and adults alike, and his wide portfolio of books offers something for every age. His most recent book, "Wumbers," was created in collaboration with Amy Krouse Rosenthal, and he has three books releasing this spring.

South Suburban Reading Council Presents: Tom Lichtenheld

Tuesday, December 4, 2012 AT 5:30 p.m.

Silver Lake Country Club – 14700 S. 82nd Avenue – Orland Park, IL

Meal Includes: Soup, Caesar Salad, Dinner Rolls, Beef Sirloin, Double Baked Potato, Vegetables & Dessert

Reservations are due by November 19, 2012.

Late reservations will not be honored!

Please **PRINT** clearly and make checks payable to SSRC.

Mail payment to: Gail Prindle, 17203 Parkside Avenue, Tinley Park, IL 60477

Name: _____ Email Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

School: _____ District: _____

_____ Member (\$25.00) _____ Yes, I would like to receive 1 CPDU for attending.

_____ Non-member (\$30.00)

_____ Pre-service Teacher (\$12.00) _____ Yes, I would like a vegetarian meal.

Tom Lichtenheld Dinner Meeting @ Silver Lake Country Club