Minnesota Center for Reading Research

2010-2012
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From the Directors

The Minnesota Center for Reading Research: Ensuring That ALL K-12 Students Are Capable and Engaged Readers

Over the past two years the Minnesota Center for Reading Research (MCRR) has undergone a substantial transformation. First and foremost, Dr. Barbara Taylor, a founding Director of the Center, retired and turned over the directorship to Drs. Matthew Burns and Lori Helman. Second, the Center expanded its scope to include students in secondary settings. Third, the physical location of the Center moved from the St. Paul Campus to Peik Hall on the Minneapolis Campus. Finally, we appointed a new Advisory Board to better reflect the scope and direction of the Center. Thus, we now think of ourselves as the New MCRR and are excited about our refocused direction and the exciting possibilities that will be realized. Our mission remains the same: we are dedicated to applied research on reading and research on teaching approaches that improve classroom reading instruction. We continue to provide leadership in reading research for the state and the nation and have expanded our outreach activities in significant ways over the past two years.

During the transformation process we developed a long-term goal and plan. Our goal was to become the national leader in reforming classroom practice through research to improve literacy outcomes for students. To accomplish this goal, we decided that we needed to (a) strengthen communication with internal and external stakeholders, (b) work with K-12 schools to change practice with mutual information sharing and data exchanges, and (c) collaborate with K-12 schools, university researchers, university-based initiatives, graduate students and other research centers across the country to engage in high quality translational research. The first two years have resulted in remarkable progress toward obtaining those goals. We will discuss each below.

Communication We continue to update our website to make it more useful to school-based professionals. Our website now contains several brief reports about research, answers to frequently asked questions, video demonstrations, and downloadable free resources for teachers to use. We also started the MCRR Quarterly Reader which is a newsletter that is produced by the MCRR and goes out to more than 850 school-based professionals. We worked with leadership in the College of Education and Human Development to discuss the work and future goals of the MCRR and how these fit into the overall college framework. Finally, we have improved our already
strong relationship with the Minnesota Department of Education. Dr. Debra Peterson serves on many MDE committees and the MCRR partnered with MDE and the Minnesota Reading Association to provide the Leadership in Reading Network (LiRN). More information on the results of these communications will be discussed below, but the LiRN project was a huge success in that over 90 members, reading teachers and other leaders, participated in the three professional development opportunities that we provided this year. The project will continue next year as well. Please contact the MCRR for additional information on any of these collaborative projects.

Bi-Directional Relationship with K-12 Schools One of the most exciting events of the past two years was the hiring of Dr. Yolanda Majors. Dr. Majors helps us accomplish two goals in our mission. First, her expertise in adolescent and adult literacy gives us the capacity to expand our focus to include students in secondary settings. Second, Dr. Majors is focused on community and school relations. Thus, she has spent many hours collaborating and building relationships with numerous K-12 schools in the state. Educational Specialist Dr. Peterson also continues to collaborate with schools across the state by serving on MDE committees, providing professional development for K-12 schools, and conducting literacy audits that help K-12 schools develop evidence-based literacy professional development plans. In the past two years we have continued to host our annual School Recognition Ceremony to honor schools that were previously not making adequate yearly progress, but had done so for the previous two consecutive years. This is always a fantastic event at which we have honored over 200 individual schools in the past two years alone! We also implemented a teacher in residence program this year in which a practicing K-12 teacher joined the MCRR to help conduct applied research. Finally, the aforementioned LiRN initiative has helped us build better relationships with schools across the state. We will continue to make our relationships with K-12 schools a top priority for the MCRR.

America Reads has also officially joined the MCRR! The America Reads program is a national initiative to improve reading outcomes. Locally, we send 350 university students to Minneapolis and St. Paul schools and community organizations to serve as reading tutors. We believed that a closer partnering between America Reads and the Center would strengthen both, and we welcome them with great enthusiasm.

Research Partners Our most exciting research news during the past two years was the creation of the Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites (PRESS), a collaboration among the MCRR, Target Corporation, Minnesota Reading Corps, Minneapolis Public Schools, and Harvest/Best Academies. The project is an $8 million three-year initiative to enhance literacy in six urban schools through quality core instruction, data-based decision making, tiered interventions, and embedded professional development. As we write this, a team of reading coaches, graduate students, and faculty are analyzing the data from our first year. We have already learned a great deal from this initiative and look forward to learning more in years 2 and 3. The MCRR has also purchased faculty time to write grants, funded graduate students to conduct research, and submitted multiple grants to state, federal, and private funding agencies.

Through enhanced communication, bi-directional relationships with K-12 schools, and an active research agenda with multiple partners, the MCRR continues to work to be the national leader in reading research. Difficult economic times have forced many university departments and centers to adjust their future goals to fit with economic realities. However, the MCRR preemptively engaged in a similar process that was based on the needs of K-12 students in Minnesota and across the country and on vision rather than predicted limitations. For this reason, we remain engaged translational partners with all K-12 stakeholders and enthusiastically look forward to writing the next chapters that ensure all K-12 students are capable and engaged readers.

Matthew Burns and Lori Helman, MCRR Co-Directors
The Minnesota Center for Reading Research was formed in 2004 under the leadership of Barbara Taylor (Curriculum & Instruction), with the support of Dean Steve Yussen and Co-Director Jim Ysseldyke (Educational Psychology), along with other faculty and staff in the College of Education and Human Development.

The mission of the Minnesota Center for Reading Research is to conduct applied research on reading and teaching approaches that facilitate reading instruction.

Our focus is on conducting research that supports teachers, particularly those who teach students of poverty, as they learn to effectively teach children and youth from diverse backgrounds to become competent readers in K-12 school settings. We work to develop all students’ reading capabilities and eliminate the achievement gap in reading for underserved populations. The MCRR provides support for applied research in reading in school settings, and we also champion basic research that will have an impact on literacy instruction and student learning.

The Minnesota Center for Reading Research conducts research that supports teachers:

- effective instructional approaches
- research-based school-wide literacy programs
- literacy assessments to monitor progress
- professional development and outreach

MCRR works with teachers, schools, and communities to make sure students are getting the best reading instruction possible and to help all children and youth become better, more engaged readers.
Barbara Taylor’s retirement from the University of Minnesota presents an excellent opportunity to take note of her amazing contributions to the College of Education and Human Development, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, the Literacy Education Program, and the Center she created - the Minnesota Center for Reading Research. In addition to her legacy at the University, Barbara’s prominence extends to the hundreds of elementary schools she influenced through the Minnesota Reading First and Reading Excellence Act programs. Her renown is well established throughout Minnesota and in reading education circles across the United States.

In her 34 years at the University of Minnesota, Barbara evolved from assistant to full professor, had a stint as the Chair of the C & I Department, established and became Director of the Minnesota Center for Reading Research, and became the Guy Bond Professor of Reading. She published more than thirty journal articles, fourteen books, and dozens of book chapters all relating to effective literacy instruction for students in elementary schools. She brought in about 20 million dollars in grants during her tenure, including the funds that would be the seed money for the Minnesota Center for Reading Research. Each of Barbara’s academic efforts aimed to help improve the reading achievement of all students, including those who struggle or are least-well served by the status quo instruction in schools.

For all of her accomplishments, one of the things that Barbara took the greatest amount of pride in was her dedication to visit elementary classrooms as often as she could. She would enthuse about how important her physical presence in schools across Minnesota was to the success of her reading improvement agenda. Each year she would make hundreds of visits to urban, suburban, and rural schools across the state. It was incredible to hear how many trips she had made to the most remote schools, even during the harsh winter months. Barbara’s persistence was key to the incredible successes she had in her school reform projects, and in her ability to influence the reading success of so many young students. She is not only a scholar of the highest repute, but also an educator most highly esteemed by teachers and leaders in the field. Barbara’s legacy adds great honor to the College and the University. We wish her continued enthusiasm and passion as she begins this new chapter in her life.
Staff & Partners

MCRR Minnesota Center for Reading Research

Matthew Burns
Co-Director
Professor
Educational Psychology

Lori Helman
Co-Director
Associate Professor
Curriculum & Instruction

Yolanda Majors
Associate Director for
Adolescent Literacy & Learning
Visiting Associate Professor
Curriculum & Instruction

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Education Specialist
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PRESS Project Coordinator

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Stacy Ernst, Coordinator, Educational Development and Research Center, CEHD, U of M
Michael Graves, Professor Emeritus, Curriculum & Instruction, CEHD, U of M
Kelly Meade, Literacy Coach, Pillsbury Elementary, Minneapolis Public Schools
Tom Norman, Director, Research, Innovation, and Outreach (RIO), CEHD, U of M
Christine Osorio, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, SPPS
Kari Ross, Instructional Specialist - Reading, Minnesota Department of Education
Audrey Suker, Chief Executive Officer, ServeMinnesota
**PRESS Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites**

**PRESS Literacy Coaches:**
- **Maureen Burke**  
  Sullivan Communication Center
- **Annie Ittner**  
  Best Academy
- **Terry Kleinbaum**  
  Harvest Preparatory School
- **Sandy Learned**  
  Marcy Open School
- **Keitha-Gail Martin-Kerr**  
  Pillsbury Elementary
- **Sarah Rutledge**  
  Anishinabe Academy

**PRESS Co-Directors:**
- **Matthew Burns**, Professor of Educational Psychology
- **Lori Helman**, Assoc. Professor of Curriculum & Instruction
- **Jennifer McComas**, Professor of Educational Psychology

**PRESS Literacy Coaches, pictured from left to right: Maureen Burke, Keitha Gail Martin-Kerr, Sarah Rutlege, Terry Kleinbaum, Annie Ittner, and Sandy Learned.**

**CEHD America Reads**

- **Jennifer Kohler**  
  Associate Director of Operations
- **Eva Boehm**  
  Associate Director of Curriculum
- **Megan Pieters**  
  Coordinator

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**Barbara Taylor**  
*Professor Emeritus*  
*Curriculum & Instruction*  
*Guy Bond Professor of Reading*  
*MCRR Director 2004-10*

My personal research interests focus on early reading intervention, school-wide reading improvement, and school and teacher factors contributing to children’s success in reading. For the past eight years, I have been researching the effectiveness of the School Change in Reading Framework in high-poverty schools. This model of school change stresses reflection on and improvement of teaching through collaborative professional development and use of data to drive the reform effort.

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**Jennifer McComas**  
*Professor*  
*Educational Psychology*

My research interests include functional analysis of problem behavior in academic and residential settings; basic behavioral processes maintaining desirable and undesirable behavior, such as schedules of reinforcement, stimulus control, and establishing operations; behavioral treatment of problem behavior based on concurrent schedules of reinforcement as well as antecedent stimuli; and analysis of academic performance of students with behavior problems.

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**Kristen McMaster**  
*Associate Professor*  
*Educational Psychology*

My research interests involve creating conditions for successful response to intervention of academically diverse learners, including students at-risk, students with disabilities, and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

My research focuses on (1) promoting teachers’ use of data-based decision-making and evidence-based instruction and (2) developing individualized interventions for students for whom generally effective instruction is not sufficient.

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**Theodore Christ**  
*Associate Professor*  
*Educational Psychology*

I am interested in highly efficient and useful assessments that guide instruction and intervention; especially those that are computer/technology-based. I am engaged in research and development to (a) promote, improve, and evaluate of school-based problem solving practices and data-based decision-making. As such I am engaged in research and development of assessment procedures and instrumentation. My aim is to promote and improve what is often described as a Response to Intervention model of service delivery.

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**Martha Bigelow**  
*Associate Professor*  
*Curriculum & Instruction*

My research interests span fields of education, applied linguistics, and cultural studies. While I have focused mainly on the language learning and schooling of adolescent refugees from East Africa, I am deeply invested in the schooling of all language learners as they learn in home, community and school settings.

I am also interested in teacher education experiences and classroom pedagogies that support equity and access in education.

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**Jennifer York-Barr**  
*Professor*  
*Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development*

My early career experience clearly set the course for my professional path: advancing collaborative teacher learning and teacher leadership so that all children learn well. I am particularly interested in the means by which isolated group and school cultures shift to be more collaborative. More specifically, I focus on ways that teachers and principals, leading together, can positively influence the culture and learning in schools by fostering high quality, ongoing, relevant learning opportunities for all staff.
Steve Yussen
Professor
Institute of Child Development
My interests are broadly in cognitive development, instructional psychology - particularly reading, and the intersection of schooling and children’s development. One strand of my earlier research examined children’s understanding of stories.

Stories, including fictional narratives, are a major source for children to learn a great deal of information about the world and about language, through both oral and written means.
VISION

All K-3 students reading proficiently at grade level by the end of third grade.

Reading by third grade is critical to success, and research proves it. That’s why Target, the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Reading Corps, and select schools in Minneapolis have formed a unique partnership to create PRESS.

PRESS aims to improve each child’s proficiency by using data to develop individualized reading plans.

FOUR COMPONENTS of PRESS

Quality Core Instruction
Support teachers with research and data in their work to improve student reading skills.

Data-Based Decision Making
Individualize instruction and screen the youngest students to identify those requiring additional support.

Tiered Interventions
Support students who are not yet proficient readers.

Professional Development
Support teachers in their work to improve student learning.
PRESS Leadership Team & Partnering Organizations

University of Minnesota, Co-Directors
Matthew Burns, Professor, Educational Psychology; MCRR Co-Director
Lori Helman, Associate Professor, Curriculum and Instruction; MCRR Co-Director
Jennifer McComas, Professor, Educational Psychology

Target Corporation
Norah Barrett, Lisa Boyd, Dean Kephart, Susan Thomson

American Institutes for Research
Katie Drummond, Zodie Makonnen, Julia Parkinson, Terry Salinger, Michele Toplitz

Minneapolis Public Schools
Marie Louiselle, Andrew Rummel

Minnesota Reading Corps
Lorien Parson, Cheryl Reid, Kathy Saltzman, Audrey Suker

PRESS School Sites | Highlights from PRESS Literacy Coaches

Anishinabe Academy
One of the best parts of this position is that I get to work with some teachers who are excited about learning and reflecting on their literacy instruction. I love the conversations I have had been able to have with teachers regarding literacy growth and instruction in the classroom.

Best Academy
Exploring effective strategies for literacy instruction with teachers by reviewing data, discussing lesson delivery and learning professionally was a profound way to move student’s forward. The relationships built with students through tiered interventions allowed for targeted learning and growth. PRESS’s holistic view of ensuring for student progress empowered teachers, students, administration, and all stakeholders.

Harvest Preparatory School
Working with PRESS has so exceeded my expectations and hopes of what I would be able to do to help students succeed. I have seen students evolve into more confident readers with a sense that reading is something at which they are good.

Marcy Open School
It is quite gratifying to discuss with my literacy assistants specific strategies that may work for a struggling reader and then to learn that those strategies did in fact work and the student showed signs of understanding. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with highly skilled graduate students from whom I’ve learned much. Those associated with the PRESS project have offered support to many kids who have grown significantly.

Pillsbury Elementary
Collaborating with staff to restructure professional learning communities. It was empowering to see staff collect students’ work, analyze the data, reflect on their practice and build capacities within grade levels.

Sullivan Communication Center
Following a first grader’s growth from fall to spring has been a highlight for me. When he entered PRESS, he knew just a few letters and sounds and now he reads and comprehends at the second grade level. It’s been great to watch this student’s confidence soar as he became a reader.
CEHD America Reads became part of the Minnesota Center for Reading Research in 2011 under the leadership of Lori Helman, Jennifer Kohler, and Eva Boehm. America Reads is a nationwide literacy project aimed at teaching the majority of children to read well and independently by the end of third grade, which is a goal that MCRR wholeheartedly supports.

America Reads is sponsored by the University’s Literacy Initiative and the College of Education and Human Development. Tutors work in elementary schools and after-school programs with the intention of improving the literacy skills of children, and attend trainings to develop their skills.

Through America Reads, more than 350 tutors from the University are placed in Minneapolis and St. Paul schools each year.

**THE CHALLENGE** In 1994, 70 percent of all children in the United States failed to attain a basic level of reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Responding to this alarming statistic, the America Reads Challenge was put forth to mobilize public and private resources to help all our children learn to read.

**OUR RESPONSE** The University of Minnesota is one of over 1,000 colleges and universities around the country participating in the America Reads Challenge by training and sending tutors into surrounding communities. Every year, over 350 America Reads Tutors from the University of Minnesota are placed in local schools and community centers to help children improve their literacy skills.
MISSION  The America Reads tutoring program facilitates a reciprocal partnership between the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis/St. Paul schools and community centers. This partnership supports academic, personal, and career development of both K-12 and University students by:

• Assisting in the development of literacy skills through one-on-one and small group tutoring at America Reads sites
• Providing young students with consistent, positive role models who expose young students to higher education
• Creating an America Reads community and encouraging tutors to become reflective, engaged thinkers through ongoing training and reflection
• Exposing America Reads tutors to diverse environments and people and providing a base for a lifetime of civic engagement
• Encouraging the development of job skills by holding America Reads tutors accountable for their responsibilities to their sites and to the America Reads program.

America Reads tutors attend a 3-hour training to learn practices and techniques related to literacy tutoring. They will tutor in a classroom, one-on-one, or afterschool program setting with elementary aged children at a local school or community site. Tutors are also required to attend a 1-credit, 1-year course for all new tutors to assist students in becoming more proactive, competent tutors and more aware, engaged community members.

There are three America Reads chapters at the University of Minnesota; each chapter serves different tutoring sites in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. After attending training, tutors are placed with elementary-aged children at a local school or community site. Tutoring includes reading stories, playing games centered around literacy skills, and providing support and encouragement.
Connecting Classrooms to Communities

The Minnesota Center for Reading Research (MCRR) provides a unique educational experience for faculty, practicing teachers, and researchers with access to exemplars of practice among students who are underserved by our schools, helping practicing teachers to consider as powerful resources the language and experiences of students of color who are poor and live in communities which are underserved. In an effort to lead the Center in identifying effective instructional approaches to engage struggling, adolescent readers at the middle and high school levels, Dr. Majors continues to advocate for culturally-based processes for reasoning, such as those employed for problem-posing and problem-solving purposes in community contexts.

For over a decade Dr. Majors has provided supportive professional development at the middle and secondary levels in the following ways:

- Offer authentic challenges to widespread assumptions about the capacities of underachieving minority students to engage in complex problem solving within classrooms;
- Provide opportunities for individuals to engage in extended analysis of teaching through multimedia vignettes of practice and to link what they see in the teaching with student work;
- Engage teachers in experiences from which to draw classroom examples, as well as demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of teaching within that community.

Guiding Language Arts Instruction Through examination of data on a secondary language arts classroom comprised of primarily African American students, it was evident that social problem-solving expertise within specific speech communities translates to academic expertise. Understanding these processes of reasoning as strengths of the African American community, it became clear that culturally-situated meaning-making processes, particularly argumentative reasoning, may be useful instructional tools in the secondary classroom. Work is currently being conducted to inform the culturally responsive pedagogical knowledge of language arts teaching in Minnesota urban schools. In particular, we look to:

- Guide the design of English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum and effective instruction, particularly in the domain of responses to literature.
- Guide the design of culturally responsive teaching and learning environments.
- In-service teacher development in their considerations of the academic affordances and implications of cultural practices in the classroom.
Research of community practices in urban settings has informed the implementation of ELA curriculum: 1) making explicit the cultural nature of domain specific problem solving within the discourse; and, 2) informing the pedagogical supports that are available to teachers in the service of instruction. There are several questions guiding our work with schools and communities at the middle and secondary level. They include the following:

- **How do instructional practices in classrooms affect racial achievement gaps?**
- **How can institutions support community organizations in efforts that inform youth literacy development?**
- **Do classroom literacy activities, or activities in a youth organization, have different influences on engagement for youth of varying ethnicities?**

In order to forge a relationship with student communities, it was imperative to connect with the school communities in Minneapolis. Our intention is to better understand the literacy skills and needs of diverse learners through collaboration with communities and schools across the Twin Cities. Thus, we have begun to foster a bidirectional relationship between practitioners and university researchers that will lead to the development of professional development opportunities to apply research to practice, including exploration of how professional learning communities effectively use both teacher and student performance data in making pedagogical and instructional decisions.

Extending our work beyond the university and the school is imperative. We have connected with several community centers serving North Minneapolis in an effort to investigate culturally-situated literacy practices in classrooms where students are deemed most at-risk.

**Yolanda J. Majors**

Associate Director for Adolescent Literacy & Learning
Visiting Associate Professor of Curriculum & Instruction

*My work is a part of recent efforts of culture, language, and literacy research to examine how users of African American English (AAE) fare in contexts of cultural community settings. In much of my research I explore the cultural and academic underpinnings of how people come to make meaning through processes of reasoning, including argumentative reasoning. I investigate culturally-situated literacy practices across African American and Latino communities and classroom contexts. My aim is to make the case for utilizing culturally-based processes for reasoning [employed within community contexts for solving real life dilemmas] as literacy learning and instructional tools in secondary classrooms.*
Bridging Research to Practice
Workshops for K-6 School Improvement in Reading

The purpose of these small-group workshops is to help school leaders and teachers in grades K-6 learn how to use scientifically-based reading instruction to improve reading achievement. The sessions will focus on organizational change and the development of shared leadership and school-wide collaboration, and may be tailored to meet the specific needs of your school.

The workshops are intended for a team of elementary school staff (administrators, classroom teachers, reading resource teachers, ELL teachers, and special education teachers). Each team may register for one or more series. Generally, each series consists of a few school teams, allowing for tailored sessions and focused small-group work.

Feedback from our workshop participants:

“I always learn new, challenging ideas when we come together in the spirit of professional learning.”

“I appreciate on-going support and collaboration from instructors. The suggested readings and resources were great. Excellent professional discussion.”

“Great chance to hear about what others are doing and think about how to use those ideas.”

“It has been very useful to be able to go back and refer to research-based information that applies to the success of our students.”

There are four different workshop series, each meeting four times during the academic year:

1. Providing Effective Reading Instruction: A Recent Review of Research and the Translation of Research into Practice

2. Developing Effective Professional Learning Communities Designed to Foster Reflection and Change in Reading Instruction

3. Use of School-Wide Data at the Student, Teacher, and School Level to Make Informed Decisions to Improve Reading

4. Tested Techniques for Coaching to Foster Self-Reflection on and Change in Reading Instruction
Building Partnerships

Over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to participate in a number of exciting partnerships. First of all, I have led professional learning with school and district leadership teams from around the state as they implement reading reform. The professional development series offer four sessions across a school year and the materials, activities, and content are then taken back and shared by the leadership teams with their colleagues. There are four series topics offered, and each year the content of these workshops is specifically tailored to the needs and challenges of the schools that are participating.

A second partnership has been the development of professional development workshops related to implementing the new English Language Arts Standards. Kari Ross, the Reading Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education, and I have presented on topics like: Helping English Learners Meet the Standards, Implementing the Reading Standards in the Content Areas, Text Complexity, Using Informational Texts in Reading Instruction, and Differentiation. It has been a joy to work with Kari as we grapple with the increased rigor recommended by the new standards.

A third partnership between the Minnesota Reading Association, the Minnesota Department of Education, and the MCRR is the Leadership in Reading Network (LiRN). Three times a year, professional learning and networking is offered to reading leaders around the state. Topics reflect issues that are relevant to school and district leaders. They include: effective instruction for English Learners, school-wide use of data, reading interventions, content area reading, integrating technology into reading instruction, and ongoing, collaborative professional learning through coaching. This collaboration between a state agency, a professional organization, and a research center demonstrates the powerful impact that can result when reading professionals work together to improve the growth and achievement of students. I look forward to building additional partnerships in the future!

Debra S. Peterson, Ph.D. in Literacy Education
Education Specialist, MCRR
Summer Literacy Workshop

MCRR hosts this annual workshop for reading practitioners and school literacy leaders, connecting them to the latest reading research findings and applications through workshops given by U of M faculty and staff who are directly engaged in reading research projects.

**WORKSHOP GOALS** This workshop occurs prior to the start of the new school year to provide an opportunity for school staff:

- to learn how to “put research into practice”
- to get new ideas and set positive, measurable goals for the upcoming school year
- to re-group, re-focus, and reflect on instructional practices
- to network and learn about resources that can help your school move forward in key areas for positive student growth and achievement in reading

**Target Audience**

K-12 teachers, ELL and special education teachers, principals, literacy coaches, reading specialists and teaching support staff. Others might include K-12 education students, district literacy personnel, and staff and faculty from other colleges or universities with a Teacher Education/Reading Licensure program.
2009 Reading Research that Meets the Needs of K-12 Readers

**KEYNOTE:**
Standards Created by MN Teachers, for MN Teachers, to Ultimately Benefit Students, Teachers, Schools and our State
Deborah R. Dillon, Professor, Guy Bond Chair in Reading, Curriculum & Instruction

**SESSION PRESENTERS:**
Matthew Burns, Theodore Christ, Michael Graves, Lori Helman, Kristen McMaster, David O’Brien, Debra Peterson, and Barbara Taylor

2010 Rigorous, Research-Based Classroom Instruction, Assessments, and Small Group Interventions

**KEYNOTE:**
Collaborative Teaching with Integrity; As Told through my Journey as a Reading Educator and Researcher
Barbara M. Taylor, Professor Emeritus, Guy Bond Professor in Reading, C&I

**SESSION PRESENTERS:**
Matthew Burns, Theodore Christ, Deborah Dillon, Lori Helman, Kristen McMaster, David O’Brien, Debra Peterson, and Jennifer York-Barr

2011 Applying Reading Research to Real Classroom Settings

**KEYNOTE:**
Leading Literacy Improvement: Shared and Nuanced Practice
Jennifer York-Barr, Professor, Organizational Leadership, Policy & Development

**SESSION PRESENTERS:**
Matthew Burns, Theodore Christ, Deborah Dillon, Lori Helman, Cynthia Lewis, Jennifer McComas, Kristen McMaster, David O’Brien, and Debra Peterson

2012 Using Reading Research to Create Communities of Learners

**KEYNOTE:**
Scaling Up an Evidence-Based Practice: Lessons Learned for Research and Practice
Kristen McMaster, Associate Professor, Educational Psychology

**SESSION PRESENTERS:**
Matthew Burns, Theodore Christ, Melissa Coolong-Chaffin, Amy Frederick, Lori Helman, Annie Ittner, Yolanda Majors, and Debra Peterson
The Minnesota Center for Reading Research sponsors an annual event to recognize schools for reading achievement. Schools have been selected for this honor based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading. Minnesota schools that made AYP in reading for two school years, after having missed AYP the previous year, are applauded for making this significant change in reading achievement.

A public lecture is presented in conjunction with the school recognition ceremony and the schools are treated to a private banquet. Each year, representatives from a few of the honored schools are asked to share some of the significant factors that led to their success and certificates are awarded to recognize the schools’ significant improvement in reading.

**2010 Building Bridges across General, Special, and Remedial Education to Improve Reading Outcomes for Kids**

Matthew Burns, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota

**LECTURE DESCRIPTION:** Focusing on the gap that sometimes exists between general, special, and remedial education reading instruction in elementary schools, Dr. Burns shares research-validated strategies that schools have used to successfully streamline and integrate their special education and general education reading instruction so that students using both programs have been able to make substantial gains in their reading skills.

Thirty-eight Minnesota elementary schools were honored at the 5th annual School Recognition Ceremony on February 26, 2010.
2011 What Would It Really Take to Improve the Vocabularies of Students Who Enter School with Very Small Vocabularies? A Framework & Six Specific Suggestions

Michael Graves, Professor Emeritus of Literacy Education, University of Minnesota

LECTURE DESCRIPTION: We all know it is vital to help students build strong vocabularies, but how do we do this? This presentation suggests a curricular framework for vocabulary instruction and lists ten specific things teachers can do to provide instruction in keeping with that framework.

Sixty-two Minnesota elementary schools were honored at the 6th annual School Recognition Ceremony on February 10, 2011.

2012 Their Way is Your Way: Development, Success, and Courage

Donald Bear, Professor in the College of Education, University of Nevada-Reno

LECTURE DESCRIPTION: Instruction may be most effective when we teach “their way,” when we follow students’ leads. It takes courage to teach developmentally, but doing so leads to success, three words that we study at the beginning of this talk: development, success and courage. As an illustration of teaching “their way is your way,” we examine how students’ word knowledge guides word study instruction. Specifically, we will visit five stages of development to see that what students are experimenting with, what they are “using but confusing” is a window to their development, their ways of learning.

136 Minnesota K-12 schools were honored at the 7th annual School Recognition Ceremony on February 29, 2012.
Research Discussions

**Winter 2010** How Do the New Media Affect K-12 Students’ Engagement in Literacy?

- Literacy Engagement with Digital Media: Bridging Frameworks
  David O’Brien, Professor of Literacy Education, Curriculum & Instruction

- Redefining Rigor: Digital Media and Engagement in the DigMe Program
  Cynthia Lewis, Professor of Literacy Education, and Cassie Scharber, Assistant Professor, C&I

**Spring 2010** Approaches to Differentiation

- How a University Partnership with a Rural School District Helped Teachers Differentiate Literacy and Content Instruction for Diverse Learners
  Lori Helman, Associate Professor, Curriculum & Instruction

- Teachers Customize PALS: Differentiating Reading Instruction with an Evidence-Based Program
  Kristin McMaster, Associate Professor, Educational Psychology

- Supporting Teachers as They Develop Differentiated Independent Activities
  Debra Peterson, PhD in Literacy Education, MCRR

**Fall 2010** Reading Comprehension Instruction

- Reading Digitally: The Multimodal Support of Comprehension, for Middle and Secondary Students
  David O’Brien, Professor, Curriculum & Instruction, and Scott Voss, PhD student in C&I

- Comprehension Instruction with English Language Learners
  Amy Frederick, PhD student in Literacy Education, Curriculum & Instruction

- Getting the Most from Your Comprehension Strategy Instruction: Tips for Elementary Teacher
  Debra Peterson, PhD in Literacy Education, MCRR

**Winter 2011** An Overview of the New Minnesota English Language Arts Standards

- Debra Peterson (MCRR) and Kari Ross (Minnesota Department of Education)

**Spring 2011** K-12 Classroom-based Research: Reading Interventions and Instruction

- Kara Coffino, PhD student in Curriculum & Instruction
  Abbey Karich, PhD student in Educational Psychology

**Fall 2011** Cultural Community Processes: Resources for Reasoning through Texts

- Yolanda Majors, Associate Director for Adolescent Literacy and Learning, MCRR
April 2011 Developing Critical Readers & Writers: Improving Adolescents' Literacies through Research, Practice, and Policy
A Celebration of the Research, Teaching, & Impact of Professor Richard Beach

The Fourth Guy Bond Memorial Conference (April 29-30, 2011, Minneapolis, MN) was sponsored by the University of Minnesota, the Bond Foundation, the Minnesota Center for Reading Research, and the Bush Foundation: “Minnesota Reads” Project. The meeting was attended by over 100 scholars and educators from across the country, including local and state K-12 educators and administrators from public and private schools, district level literacy leaders, higher education faculty, reading researchers, state department personnel, policy makers, and legislators or government relations representatives. The conference also offered the opportunity to celebrate the research, teaching, and impact of Professor Richard Beach, University of Minnesota.

The overall theme for the conference was to explore research on the unique literacy skills, knowledge, and practices adolescents’ enact in and out of school, focusing on findings that can be used to enhance the literacy learning of adolescents. Scholars discussed preparing students to be more than “proficient readers;” focusing instead on how to develop critical readers and writers. This stance is particularly important in the current political climate that includes the adoption of Common Core Standards in reading and language arts across the nation. For example, a recent analysis of the Common Core Standards indicates that the standards will represent a considerable change for students and educators with respect to the task demands. Adolescent readers are being asked to move beyond identifying main ideas, key concepts, word meanings from context, and strategies. There is increased attention to language study and tasks that require higher order cognitive demands. In light of research describing the literacy learning of adolescents, and the demands new policies place on teachers and students, presenters shared with audience members the practices or methodologies that support the development of critical readers and writers. Conference keynote speakers and the topics of their presentations included:

**Media Literacies | Donna E. Alvermann, University of Georgia**
**Disciplinary Literacies | Elizabeth Birr Moje, University of Michigan**
**Literature | Deborah Appleman, Carleton College**
**Critical Literacies | Jerry Harste, Indiana University (Emeritus)**
**Writing | Chris M. Anson, North Carolina State University**

Over 40 additional literacy scholars and educators presented at breakout sessions across the two-day conference and another 18 individuals—many of whom were classroom teachers from the surrounding cities and suburbs—presented posters outlining ways they seek to meet the needs of adolescent literacy learners in their respective educational settings.

The conference was a success due to the efforts of many individuals. However, a meeting of this scope would not be possible without support from the Bond family. Specifically, the Guy Bond Memorial Conference is made possible by monies from an endowment from the Bond family in honor of Guy Bond’s contributions to the College and the field of reading nationally. The very first Bond Memorial conference was held in October, 1994. The conference theme was “The First R: Each Child’s Right to Read.” The second Bond Conference was held in 1997, and the theme was “Reading for Meaning: Fostering Comprehension in the Middle Grades.” The third Bond Conference was held October 10-11, 2005 and the theme was “Educational Interventions for Struggling Readers.” It is fitting that the fourth conference, held in April 2011, focused on adolescents’ literacies, in that this focus rounds out the themes that have spanned early through high school literacy development.

*Deborah R. Dillon, Guy Bond Chair in Reading & Professor of Literacy Education*
Literacy Resources

Selected publications from the MCRR Affiliated Faculty:
Recent journal articles, book chapters, and books related to reading research


Rodriguez, M. C., Matuska, K., Cabrera, J, & Karl, S. [2010]. Improving the education of Minnesota’s students from pre-K through college: Measuring student progress and using data to drive decision making. CURA Reporter, 40(1-2), 3-10.


