



Reader Identity and the Common Core: Agency and Identity in Leveled Reading

Theresa Abodeeb-Gentile and Lisa Zawilinski
University of Hartford

ABSTRACT

This article moves beyond the common core and leveled literacy instruction to demonstrate how diverse learners in one fourth grade classroom, challenged teacher authority in an effort to position themselves as capable readers. In doing so, they implored the teachers to consider the social context of reading as an essential component to the ways in which we offer readers opportunities to grow. Readers' identities, were both limited by and grew out of the opportunities pertaining to leveled reading that were made available within the classroom. The vignettes examined contain implications for how a student's sense of agency and reader identity impacts who they are as readers and how they are viewed within the culture of the classroom.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Theresa Abodeeb-Gentile Ed.D, teaches literacy methods courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Theresa prepares teachers using, research-based methods for helping elementary aged students develop literacy skills and focuses her instruction on application of reading theory into practice. Theresa's research examines the way student and teacher interactions impact their identities as literacy learners in various contexts. She also examines ways that students learn various aspects of literacy in classrooms and what informs learning. Theresa can be reached at abodeebge@hartford.edu.

Lisa Zawilinski, Ph.D, teaches literacy methods courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Lisa provides research-based methods for helping children develop literacy skills and strategies across various learning contexts. She embeds Internet technologies within instruction with a focus on student variability. Lisa's research examines the skills and strategies necessary for elementary grade students to communicate to share and gather information on the Internet. She also examines how to support teachers as they explore technologies within their teaching. Lisa can be reached at zawilinsk@hartford.edu.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have become one of the most hotly discussed topics in education as of late. These standards are being implemented, it would seem, to provide a high quality of education for all students and to address the rigor of what our students read and how they acquire the skills necessary to move into twenty-first century careers. A major focus of this work has been on college and career readiness and in an effort to prepare all students, a great deal of attention to text complexity has become a central consideration in the teaching of the core. Page 2 of Appendix A of the Common Core (201) states:



One of the key requirements of the Common Core State Standards for Reading is that all students must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school. By the time they complete the core, students must be able to read and comprehend independently and proficiently the kinds of complex texts commonly found in college and careers (n.p.).

The premise that students must read texts of increasing complexity is what many teachers rely on for designing reading instruction that seeks to meet student needs, take them from where they are and support them into grade level proficiency. This refutes the notion that there is a one-size-fits-all approach to reading instruction. In fact, the idea that a one-size-fits-all curriculum does not work has been widely shared in critiques of the No Child Left behind legislation (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006; Meier, Kohn, Darling-Hammond, Sizer, & Wood, 2004; Ravitch, 2011).

Also refuting a one-size-fits-all approach is the idea of differentiated instruction to meet student needs (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). Many well-documented instructional techniques and assessments have been developed to guide teachers to differentiate reading instruction for their students. These instructional techniques and assessments, such as guided reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), interventions such as Soar to Success (Houghton Mifflin, 1999, 2006), Leveled Literacy Intervention (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009, 2012) and performance assessments like the DRA2 (Beaver, 2005) and the Benchmark Reading Assessment (Fountas & Pinnell, 2008, 2011) are widely used in schools and support a leveled reading approach. A leveled approach to reading instruction aligns with the current charge found in Appendix A of the Common Core to ensure students are reading texts with increasing text complexity which are correlated to lexile levels, currently the benchmark cited for measuring text complexity. These reading instructional approaches and materials drive current practice in classrooms with the goal set forth by No Child Left Behind and education reform that all students will read at grade level by third grade (NCLB, 2002).

Another perspective on the idea of leveling, according to Glasswell and Ford (2011), is that reading levels are different than reading needs. For example, students need to be engaged and thoughtful about their reading. Without strong interest and engagement, instruction may be designed to move readers through levels but in the end can result in readers who are disinterested and lack thoughtful sharing of ideas about their reading. Texts that are appropriately leveled but are not of interest to students may actually limit engagement and overall desire to go beyond thinking about more than the surface level of texts. However, best practices in literacy instruction, such as those previously mentioned, promote small groups and leveled reading as a hallmark of meeting students' reading needs. While helpful on the one hand, these literacy practices present a dichotomy between moving every student toward grade level proficiency and differentiating instruction and also producing thoughtful and engaged readers. In addition, leveled reading may be problematic when it comes to students' identities as readers since students construct reader identities based on what is valued and recognized in classrooms (Davies, 1993, 1994; Gee, 2000, 2004; Street, 1994).

In this article, I move beyond the Common Core and leveled literacy instruction to document how students in one fourth grade classroom, who read below grade level, challenged teacher authority in an effort to position themselves as capable readers. These students, who participated in leveled reading groups, urged the teachers in this classroom to see them as readers beyond the levels that were assigned. In doing so, they implored the teachers to consider the social context of reading as an essential component to the ways in which we offer readers



opportunities to grow. Readers' identities, in fact, grew out of the opportunities that were made available within the culture. Though these opportunities initially limited students' abilities to be seen as capable readers, in the end, students' sense of self seemed to have a significant impact on who they were as readers and how they were viewed within the culture of the classroom.

What is Reader Identity?

The pairing of literacy and identity is grounded in the notion that literacy is not a set of prescribed skills and promotes the idea that literacy is social and cultural and linked to the values, practices, and beliefs of the larger culture (Barton, 1994; Bloome, 1989; Davies, 1994; Gee, 2000, 2004; Street, 1984, 1995; Weedon, 1997). Literacy identity, from which reader identity is derived, can have multiple meanings (Moje & Luke, 2009). For the purposes of this study, reader identity pertains to a sense of self that is ever changing according to positions that are taken up or resisted (Davies, 1993, 1994; Weedon, 1997), which are linked to membership in a group (Gee, 2000, 2004), and are related to literacy practices, specifically reading. Inherent in this view of reader identity is the idea that social contexts and interactions shape identities, which is important since how we read and write may have social implications for how we are viewed and also view ourselves within a particular group (Davies, 1993, 1994; Gee, 2000, 2004; Street, 1994). In addition, identity is also inherently linked to agency since readers demonstrate a sense of agency when they take up and resist positions or opportunities that are made available within particular social contexts (Davies, 1993). Individuals who resist being positioned in certain ways can be viewed as acting with agency. This is significant when considering that identities can also be viewed as labels (Moje & Luke, 2009); for example, the labels of good reader, poor reader, or leveled reader, have social and learning implications in a classroom and at least, in part, contribute to the shaping of a reader's identity (Davies, 1994). When a reader acts with agency, he or she is essentially resisting an assigned label such as good reader, poor reader, or leveled reader.

Labels may also be considered positions or opportunities that students have access to. Wortham (2004) points out that students who are consistently positioned in particular ways, i.e. as levels, take up identities that suggest they are a particular kind of student. The construction of identities from this perspective has strong implications for classroom literacy practices and what is valued in the classroom. So while readers are not levels and levels are different than needs, how then do students construct successful literacy identities while also being positioned in the context of everyday leveled literacy practices, and what might teachers need to consider in an effort to meet all of their reading needs?

Reader Identity and the Common Core

The Common Core standards call for students to read texts with increasingly more challenging text complexity. For students who struggle with text, this charge presents additional challenges. One way that schools compensate for students who may struggle with reading texts that are too difficult is to place them in groups where students are reading at what is identified as their need, also indicating their instructional level (Ankrum & Bean, 2007). This level determines what texts students have access to and what they are allowed to read in classrooms. These practices shape individual reader identities in particular ways. Hull and Moje (2012) point out that while the Common Core represents the best efforts from the field to engage students in



literacy practices that represent the practices of the wider society, there is still a particular vision of literacy that is privileged by these standards. This vision of literacy privileges print-based skills and successful participation in a variety of school based activities. These practices and activities directly impact the construction of reader identities (Moje & Luke, 2009) and successful participation is often used as capital by students, giving those that acquire success advantage over others (Bourdieu, 1982).

Context of the Study

The vignettes in this article come from a year-long qualitative study that took place in a fourth grade classroom at Elk Street School in the Northeast United States. During the study, I was a school reading specialist and was a participant observer two or more days a week during the literacy block. While in the classroom, I worked alongside the teacher, Kate, who had been a fourth grade teacher for 10 years. As a participant in the classroom, I taught both whole class and small group reading lessons, took field notes, and audio and video-taped classroom literacy events. After several weeks, focal students were identified. These four students, Beth, Alice, Charlie, and Marty, participated in the reading group I routinely worked with and provided extremely rich data since I had frequent and regular interactions with them as I participated in their group.

In this study, I used a combination of ethnographic interpretation through thematic analysis (Ely, Anzul, Freidman, & Garner, 1991) and the methods of discourse analysis (Gee, 1999; Fairclough, 1992, 1995) to provide a solid framework for the description, analysis, and implications of the study. I coded and categorized several literacy events that took place with the four focal students. These events revealed a pattern of students' resistance to the routine literacy practices of the classroom and these instances of resistance became the "critical moments" (Fairclough, 1992) that made visible how identities were constructed within the context of the study. The following vignettes detail "critical moments" from the study, in which two focal students, Beth and Alice, resist the identities that have been assigned by their reading group.

"Are We Going to Read that Book?": A Clash of Identities

This literacy event took place in the context of teacher-led small group reading. The interaction was initiated by Beth who was placed in my reading group based on her DRA scores, which placed her below the expected fourth grade level. In addition, her records from a previous school indicated that she had received extra help with reading, and the focus of the reading group was to improve comprehension and fluency with the goal of reaching grade level reading by the end of the school year. This goal was determined by our charge under education reform to have all students reading at grade level by the end of third grade and prepared to take the statewide fourth grade language arts test in May. The following scene illustrates the clash of identities that occurred in the reading group.

My group joined me at the back table where I had the new book we would be starting on the table. Since the practice of "guided reading" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) and leveling texts was new to our school, multiple copies of leveled books were not always readily available, and we used the materials we had prior to the start of this school year. While Kate and I used some specifically leveled books (according to DRA level) and others that were not, there were points of trial and error as Kate and I selected books for each group. I often used intervention texts from



the *Soar to Success* program (Cooper, Boschken, McWilliams, & Pistoichini, 1999), which did not level texts in accordance with particular assessments but did level texts based on a text gradient from more simple to more complex text structure. This program consisted of several titles that were ordered by difficulty leading up to what was considered a grade level text at the end of 20 weeks in the program. The primary model proposed for use with these materials was a reciprocal teaching model (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Though I did not use the texts as explicitly as it was suggested in the teacher's manual, I did select the texts for the group in the order of difficulty that they were organized. Many of the first several books in the program were picture books that did not contain a great deal of text, which appealed to me because they were supportive texts that could also be read fairly quickly (in one or two reading group sessions) since I was not meeting with the group every day. While this practice did support many of the instructional needs of the group, and the model of reading instruction that was being implemented in the classroom, it did not take into consideration students' engagement as readers and did not offer students an opportunity to have any input into what we read.

As an intervention teacher, I was most focused on identifying student needs based on their reading levels and moving students through the levels until they reached grade level proficiency. Both Kate's group and the independent reading group were reading more difficult texts in the form of chapter books. Kate also selected these texts based on instructional level but had more of a focus on instructing students to think about the deeper meaning of texts and so also selected books that had more sophisticated plots and themes. Beth and the others in our group often paid close attention to what others were reading and as the year progressed, this prompted many questions and concerns from members of our group.

The impetus for the critical moment I describe here was Beth's inquiry about what book we would be reading next and her further resistance to reading the book that I had selected for the group, which was a routine practice during reading groups. This practice of teacher selection was implemented based on the belief that the teachers chose the books that all groups read in an effort to match both their reading level and instructional needs with an appropriate text. Beth's resistance to the book that I chose for them seemed to revolve around the fact that it was a picture book and she wanted to read a chapter book which was aligned with what the other two reading groups were reading. The interaction resulted in a conflict between the identity Beth perceived the book signaled and the identity she wanted to construct for herself as a reader. In the following transcript, the conflict is highlighted through questioning, tone of voice, and body language as Beth resisted her assigned identity:

- Beth: (*Speaking to me*) What are we reading today?
Me: This. (*Points to the picture book on the table.*)
Beth: Why are we reading this? (*Points to the book and sounds annoyed, disappointed, angry.*)
Beth: Are we going to read that book? (*Spoken strongly as she points to another group [middle group] who is reading a chapter book.*)
Me: I don't know, we'll see.
Me: This is the next thing that I chose for us to read. (*There is an emphasis on I and comes across as a little exasperated at Beth and having to justify myself.*)

This interaction demonstrates that Beth and I had competing agendas. My agenda was to select an instructional text that would support the group's learning needs, and Beth's agenda was to



portray an identity as a reader that gave her equal status with her peers. This resulted in a clash of identities since Beth was resisting the idea that she needed to read what I had selected and also the identity she perceived I was constructing for her. In addition, this event exemplifies a routine conflict that became a major source of tension within the group. Students, especially Alice and Beth, regularly expressed dislike and disinterest for the books I selected for the group. While they usually went on interacting with the text during group time, they were often only marginally engaged, though they were technically successful during the instruction.

In this classroom, cultural norms were established in the form of the leveled reading groups. Beth and I both seemed to be drawing on the belief that membership in a reading group implied certain criteria for instruction, specifically, who got to read what based on a level. This idea had implications for what counted as literacy and that the book choice had significance for how literacy identities were being constructed both by the teachers and the students. The idea that students were grouped for reading was in place to help support students' instructional needs, and the decisions about what books we read were also intended to support students' instructional needs (field notes, October 2). However, it was through these interactions that students came to understand what was valued and expected within the classroom and they did not always signal successful literacy identities.

Beth was keenly aware of the differences between the books that our group was reading and the books that she observed other groups reading. In addition, membership within the reading group itself signified that success was based on the idea that students were able to read at, above, or below grade level with a certain amount of proficiency. This was done according to a predetermined set of criteria that was derived from assessment data (field notes, November 4). The DRA leveling data for the class became the criteria for reading groups, and this data also supported my decision to select a book that was below a fourth grade level. What I had not considered, however, was that also contained in this decision were implications for students' reader identities.

My interpretation of the group's capabilities directly impacted the choices that I made about the books we selected (readiness to assimilate skills). Routine positioning of students in this way signaled to Beth that she was a particular kind of student (Wortham, 2004). In essence, she understood that I believed she was not as capable as other readers, which was an identity that she resisted by questioning what I chose for her to read. Though we did not discuss "leveling" with students, they were aware that each group read different texts (field notes, October 5). This awareness and interpretation of what it meant to read a particular text, at least to some degree, influenced Beth's interactions and her agenda for determining what counted as successful literacy in this culture. Gee (1996) states that literacy can be equated with acquisition and members of a group are apprenticed into particular ways of thinking and acting. Acquisition of what it means to be literate through exposure to cultural models, Gee argued, is what good teachers do alongside of teaching specific ideas about literacy. Members come to acquire literacy and maintain membership in "the literacy club" (Smith, 1998) based on how they view themselves or how others view them. In this case, literacy was acquired by reading texts at a particular level which had strong implications for what counted as literacy in the classroom and for students' literacy identities.

From the perspective of literacy as acquisition, the fact that the teachers controlled the text selections based on students' instructional levels directly affected the students' ability to acquire particular capital within the classroom. The chapter books that other groups were reading signified the capital or "level" that Beth desired in order to position herself as successfully



literate within the classroom. Her resistance demonstrated agency in resisting the identity that was constructed for her within the culture, and over time, this led to a conflict between the reading groups. In the following episode, Beth and Alice demonstrate how their sense of agency caused a clash among the reading groups and ultimately shifted their identities within the classroom.

“These Are *Our* Books!”: Reading Groups Clash

The following event took place after Kate finished her morning routine of homework review and spelling or word analysis lesson. The class began to move around and break up into their respective reading groups as I entered and began to set up the video camera. Just as I finished setting up the video camera, I joined Kate to check in and discuss the plan for the day. We previously had lengthy conversations about the issues I was having with my group regarding the books they were reading. I expressed my concern that the constant attention to what other groups were reading, despite my attempts to explain why I chose specific books, was having a negative impact on the group. Kate and I discussed the instructional needs of all of the groups. We carefully considered several texts that might meet the needs of multiple groups and selected a text we thought might meet the needs of two groups though their instructional needs were not exactly the same. I began reading the book with my group before Kate did.

The following transcript represents the interactions that took place as students went to the back table to get the books they were assigned to read. Alice and Beth approached the table where several boys were already seated and beginning to read a short chapter book.

- Beth: We need our books! (*She was standing next to Alice and spoke to Joey, Greg, and Johnny who were in Kate’s reading group. She addressed them while pointing to a pile of books that they were about to start reading.*)
- Joey: You’re not having these. (*Put his hand on the pile of books.*)
- Alice: That’s *OUR* book! (*Leans forward and raised her voice slightly*)
- Greg: Oh, *you guys* are reading this (*picks up the book*) *Sugar Cakes Cyril?* (*Looks at the girls while smirking.*)
- Johnny: I thought that was *our* new book, I already started reading it.
- Alice: *SO* did we.
- Stuart: *We’re* on Chapter 4 already. (*Voice is high pitched with emphasis on we’re.*)
- Beth and Alice: *SO* are we!
- Kate: (*Overhears*) *You all* need to share the books! (*Girls grabbed 2 copies and boys went back to silently reading their copies. They glanced around at each other and rolled their eyes but said no more.*)

Agency and Striving for Successful Identities

In this event, Beth and Alice both demonstrate a sense of agency by resisting their peers’ questions about their assignment to read the same book. In doing so, the girls claimed a shift in their status within the groups and the classroom because they were reading the same text. In other events, such as in the previous event when Beth challenges the book I selected for the group, agency did not result in an immediate shift in her status. In fact, her resistance often resulted in moments of tension, but in this case, the girls’ resistance was awarded with access to the same forms of literacy capital as other members of the larger group. The impact of this event



on the construction of students' literacy identities is significant because the students themselves determined what and who were considered successfully literate in this event.

In addition to the significance that this event had on students' literacy identities, there is great significance in the fact that Kate and I were persuaded by students' agentic moves to think beyond instructional levels and to find common texts that students could have access to. As students challenged what they read, they were also challenging us to seek out ways to meet both their social and learning needs successfully and to see them as intertwined and interdependent. Kate's support and use of authority in this event when she told students to share, contributed to the shaping of capable and positive identities for Beth and Alice. This contrasted alternate identities that were previously constructed for them in relation to the routine literacy practices of the classroom. In this event, Beth and Alice successfully contributed to the definitions of what counted as literacy and ultimately who was considered literate in this event.

Discussion/Conclusion

Though the Common Core standards do not address the social context of learning or a student's reader identity as complex factors that should be considered in the development of a reader, states like New York include factors that measure range, quality, and text complexity of student reading such as "matching readers to text and task" (New York State P12 Common Core Standards, p. 41). These tasks, as suggested by the CCSS, include considering a student's motivation, knowledge and experience when planning high quality literacy instruction. I make the assertion based on the previous vignettes that a student's identity as a reader has a direct correlation to their engagement, their motivation to read (Glasswell & Ford, 2011), and their knowledge as a reader and may also be experience dependent. The proposed CCSS framework for understanding range, quality, and text complexity of student reading (New York State P12 Common Core Standards, p. 41) urges teachers to consider the social context of literacy and its implications for reader identity and how that impacts student access and overall achievement in reading. The stories of students like Alice and Beth go beyond the Common Core to portray that who we are as readers and how we see ourselves across learning contexts may have as much to do with our success as readers as does the teaching of more rigorous standards.

Furthermore, the consideration of social constructs of learning, such as agency and identity, demonstrate a need for teachers to consider the current practices in literacy learning and strive for pedagogies that include all students by giving them access to multiple ways in which to become successfully literate. The practice of guided reading and use of leveled texts, for example, in many ways allows students to have appropriate time and materials to successfully scaffold necessary instruction in reading and ultimately guide them to becoming proficient readers. These practices, however, can also be limiting unless teachers find numerous ways for students to acquire the necessary capital to construct themselves as successfully literate within classrooms. This means that all students must have diverse opportunities for reading many different texts and for having access to texts at multiple levels (Glasswell & Ford, 2011). This could occur through the use of multimedia, mixed and truly flexible reading groups, and mixed ability literature discussion circles, in addition to instructional level, teacher-led small group instructional reading. Involving students in conversations about what and how they read is also crucial to empowering students to construct strong and positive identities as literate members of a community.



Though the Common Core standards charge us to immerse students in complex texts and assess their reading levels, teachers need to be in tune with students' strengths and interests as well to help them negotiate multiple texts in a variety of situations. This perspective of literacy learning also includes a definition of curriculum that is fluid and changing and which allows for students to draw on personal experience when choosing and interpreting texts, as well as a diverse perspective on what counts as literacy. As teachers, we must find ways for students to act with a sense of agency in classrooms and ways to express personal voice with regard to literacy learning and the construction of their literacy identities. This perspective also diminishes the notion that leveling prevails over and above consideration of students' social and learning needs and urges teachers to consider multiple ways to engage students in a wide variety of texts and literary experience such that the common core does promote. In addition, teachers must give strong consideration to the ways in which students are informed by our views of literacy and the implications of our practices in the construction of successful reader identities.



References

- Alvermann, D. (2001). Reading adolescents' reading identities: Looking back to see ahead. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 44, 676-690.
- Act, N. C. L. B. (2002). Public Law 107-110. Washington, DC: US Congress. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>
- Ankrum, J. & Bean, R. (2007). Differentiated reading instruction: what and how. *Reading Horizons*, 48(1), 133-146
- Barton, D. (1994). *Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of written language*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Barton, D., Hamilton, M., & Ivanic, R. (2000). *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context*. New York: Routledge.
- Bloome, D., Carter, S. P., Christian, B. M., Otto, S., & Shuart-Faris, N. (2005). *Discourse analysis and the study of classroom language and literacy events: A microethnographic perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Bourdieu, P. (1982). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cadiero-Kaplan, K. (2002). Literacy ideologies: Critically engaging the language arts curriculum. *Language Arts*, 79, 372-381.
- Cazden, C. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (2006). Troubling images of teaching in No Child Left Behind. *Harvard Education Review*, 76, 668-697.
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2010). Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History. *Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>
- Cook-Gumperz, J. (Ed.). (2006). *The social construction of literacy* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Cooper, D., Boschken, I., McWilliams, J., & Pistochini, L. (1999). *Soar to success: The intermediate intervention program*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Davies, B. (1993). *Shards of glass*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.
- Davies, B. (1994). *Poststructuralist theory and classroom practice*. Geelong, AU: Deakin, University Press.
- Ely, M., Anzul, M., Freidman, T., & Garner, D. (1991). *Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles*. New York, NY: The Falmer Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Essex, UK: Longman Group Limited.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fountas, I. & Pinnell, G. (1996). *Guided reading: good first teaching for all children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I. & Pinnell, G. (2008). *Benchmark Assessment System*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gee, J. (1989). What is literacy? *Journal of Education*, 171, 18-25.
- Gee, J. (1992). *The social mind: Language, ideology and social practice*. New York, NY: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc.



- Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gee, J. P. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gee, J. P. (2005). Semiotic social spaces and affinity spaces: From the age of mythology to today's schools. In D. Barton, D. & K. Tusting, (Eds.), *Beyond communities of practice: Language, power and social context* (pp. 214-232). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- George, P. (2005). A rationale for differentiating instruction in the regular classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, 44, 185-193.
- Glasswell, K & Ford, M. (2011). Let's start leveling about leveling. *Language Arts*, 88, 209-216.
- Holland, D., Lachiotte, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hull, G., & Moje, E. B. (2012). What is the development of literacy the development of. *Understanding Language Conference*, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.
- Ivanic, R. (1998). *Writing and identity: The discursive construction of identity in academic writing*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Laidlaw, L. (1998). Finding "real" lives: Writing and identity. *Language Arts*, 75, 126-136.
- Lewis, M., Flint, A., & Van Sluys, K. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts*, 79, 382-392.
- McTighe, J. & Brown, J. (2005). Differentiated instruction and educational standards: Is détente possible? *Theory Into Practice*, 44, 234-244.
- Meier, D., Kohn, A., Darling-Hammond, L., Sizer, T., & Wood, G. (2004). *Many children left behind: How the No Child Left Behind Act is damaging our children and our schools*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Moje, E.B., & Luke, A. (2009). Literacy and identity: Examining the metaphors in history and contemporary research. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 44, 415-437.
- Murphy, S. (1997). Literacy assessment and the politics of identities. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 13, 261-278.
- No Child Left Behind (n.d.). White House Summary [Data File]. Retrieved from White House Website, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/reports/no-child-left-behind.html>
- Palinscar, A. S. & Brown, A. L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction*, 1, 117-175.
- Ravitch, D. (2011). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Smith, F. (1998). *Understanding reading*. (4th ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Street, B. (1984). *Literacy in theory and Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Street, B. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development. Ethnography and education*. New York, NY: Longman Publishing.
- Tomlinson, C., & McTighe, J. (2006). *Integrating differentiated instruction and understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Van Lier, L., Walqui, A. (2012) Language and the Common Core State Standards. *Understanding Language Conference*, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.



- Varenne, H., & McDermott, R. (1999). *Successful failure: The school America builds*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language* (Revised Edition). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Wortham, S. (2004). From good student to outcast: The emergence of a classroom identity. *ETHOS*, 32, 164-187.
- Wortham, S. (2006). *Learning identity: The joint emergence of social identification and academic learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.