

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Comprehensive Literacy Classroom!

Patricia L. Scharer with Carla Steele, Shelly Schaub, and Jonathan Bailey

The six color-coded sections of this book represent the essential components of responsive literacy organized around a comprehensive framework: professional learning, organizing for learning, reading, writing, building blocks of language, and learning community. The colors for each section are then echoed on the edge of the pages so you can find topics easily.

Our goal was to create a reader-friendly book brimming with illustrative photographs, easy-to-navigate charts, and essential understandings to support professional learning and student achievement.

Let's take a closer look now at each section. While there is a logical sequence to this book, you can also study sections one at a time depending on your needs and interests.

Section One: Professional Learning

The first five chapters of this book are labeled as Professional Learning because the content of these chapters reflects core beliefs we share that influence every chapter that follows. We believe in the importance of oral language, the essential role of children's literature, and the connection between teachers' actions and their students' emotional well-being and literate identity. These core beliefs are carefully examined in Section One and then woven throughout the rest of the book.

The design of the book assumes that educators will work together to read the chapters, discuss the impact of new learning in their classrooms, and participate in the suggestions for professional learning at the end of each chapter. Lifelong learning is the goal for all educators affiliated with Literacy Collaborative at The Ohio State University.

We believe that oral language is truly the foundation for comprehensive literacy. In Chapter 1, Gay Su Pinnell challenges the notion that a “quiet classroom is a good classroom” and argues, instead, for intentional instructional decisions that foster discussion and develop a literate environment in the classroom. For example, these two girls are learning about words, making decisions, and creating a rationale for those decisions as they work together to sort the words into categories. The boys are sharing their favorite books. Such small-group activities are found across the literacy block as the room quietly “hums” with literacy discussion and learning. And, in large-group meetings, the voices of students are also heard as the teacher invites discussion during Interactive Read-Aloud or shared reading.



**Learners sharing
their thinking
together**

Children's literature is the focus in Chapter 2 as Patricia Scharer helps you think about comprehension via a literary lens that helps foster understanding of texts and an appreciation for the craft of authors and illustrators. The comprehensive literacy classroom must be rich with quality books and opportunities for students to read, discuss, and write about books.



■ Inviting and organized classroom library

■ Books We've Shared anchor chart

Books We've Shared	
• <u>First Day Jitters</u>	by: Julie Danneberg
• <u>Don't Squeal Unless it's a BIG Deal</u>	by: Jeanie Franz Ransom
• <u>My Mouth is a Volcano!</u>	by: Julia Cook
• <u>The Relatives Came</u>	by: Cynthia Rylant
• <u>You're Mean, Lily Jean</u>	by: Frieda Wishinsky
• <u>Enemy Pie</u>	by: Derek Munson
• <u>The Most Magnificent Thing</u>	by: Ashley Spires
• <u>Do Unto Others</u>	by: Laurie Keller
• <u>The New Girl...and Me</u>	by: Jacquie Robbins
• <u>The Recess Queen</u>	by: Alexis O'Neill
• <u>Ten Rules You Absolutely Must Not Break if You Want to Survive the School Bus</u>	by: John Grandits
• <u>Milo's Hat Trick</u>	by: Jon Agee

Both oral language and children's books are found in Chapter 3 as Shelly Schaub introduces you to a range of instructional contexts found in comprehensive literacy classrooms. These are classrooms where students know that their role is to read and write extensively every day and where teachers have established rich opportunities for that to happen. For example, a circular rug is used daily for independent reading, book discussions, and whole-class meetings about reading and writing as described in this chapter.



Environment: areas for large-group, small-group, and individual study

Chapter 4 by Carol A. Lyons and Chapter 5 by Wendy Sheets are important reminders that everything we say and do as teachers can affect a child's emotional health and literate identity. The authors remind us that when students find tasks too difficult, the brain is affected, making learning impossible. Developing a student's identity as a reader and writer is just as important as helping them read increasingly more difficult texts.

Section Two: Organizing for Learning

The chapters in Section Two focus on the classroom environment and routines which make independent learning possible so that the teacher can work with individuals and small groups of students with similar needs. In Chapter 6, Justina Henry, Barbara Joan Wiley, and Shelly Schaub focus on how one teacher established routines in her primary classroom so students knew how to use activities such as their browsing boxes, Writing Center, Listening Center, Reading Center, and Word Study Center to experience authentic reading and writing tasks independently.



Individual browsing boxes for independent reading and Writing Center



Listening Center

ABC/Word Study Center

In Chapter 7, Shelly Schaub and Denise Rowe explain how second-grade students develop stamina to read and write for increasingly long periods of time independently as they transition to Reading Workshop in grades 3 and beyond. Anchor charts are created during whole-class mini-lessons as the students learn how to make good decisions about choosing books from the class library to read during Reading Workshop.

Readers make good book choices by choosing "Just Right" books.		
Too Easy	Just Right	Too Challenging
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• read it before• can read it fast• not much text• easy to understand• simple words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• enjoy it• I can understand most of it• only a little problem solving• a few parts where I slow down to figure it out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hard to understand• lots of words that I don't know• doesn't make sense• too many tricky parts

Anchor chart

Whole-group meeting area for reading and writing mini-lessons, Interactive Read-Aloud, and group share



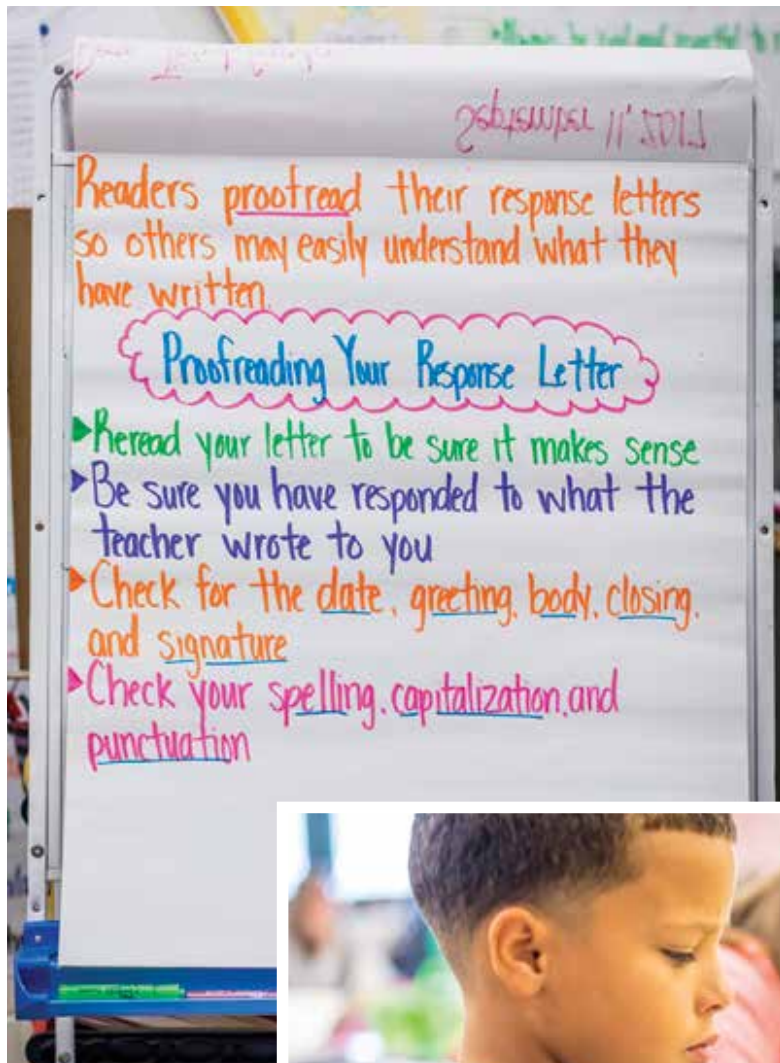
Chapter 8, authored by Sherry Kinzel and Wendy Sheets, offers 30 days of mini-lessons including examples of teacher language to support each lesson and anchor charts. Mini-lesson #1, for example, is about teaching the class how to select and return books to the right bin to keep the classroom library well organized according to genre, topics, and author/illustrator. The instructional content of mini-lessons may last one day or several depending on the students' needs, but all lead to establishing routines supporting independent reading and writing.



Inviting classroom library organized by genres, authors, and topics

Readers choose books based on their interests during independent reading





Charts with mini-lessons

Independent reading and writing about reading



Section Three: Reading

Chapter 9 by Lisa Pinkerton introduces readers to the daily Interactive Read-Aloud, celebrated in every comprehensive literacy classroom. The chapter emphasizes how to carefully select a book and prepare for this whole-class learning experience, a powerful learning time as students share their thoughts before, during, and after the reading. Later, teachers may choose to use some of these books as mentor texts in writing mini-lessons. You will find an extensive list of recommended books at the back of the book.



Interactive Read-Aloud

The next two chapters in this section focus on ways to support readers' phrasing and fluency. In Chapter 10, Andrea McCarrier writes about supporting fluency during Interactive Read-Aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. In Chapter 11, Patricia L. Scharer focuses on shared reading, reminding us that students of all ages can benefit from shared readings of books, poems, charts, and other texts. Both chapters emphasize the importance of fluency relative to comprehension and text interpretation.



Shared Reading

Next, in Chapter 12, Sherry Kinzel writes about the crucial role of data analysis to make instructional decisions. You will learn about Evan as a reader by analyzing his reading records so that the teacher knows exactly what Evan already understands and what he is ready to learn next. Data analysis is also a central part of Nikki Woodruff's Chapter 13 on Guided Reading. Key to this chapter is how teachers can support students' strategic actions, which leads to deeper understanding and higher achievement. Chapter 14 by Mary Fried demonstrates how to think about the book introduction when working with young readers to scaffold their learning and ensure success.

The u-shaped table in the picture below is organized for the day with the first set of guided reading books carefully selected and the notebooks holding running records and other student data gathered daily. Of course, schools must have a well-stocked collection of guided reading books so that teachers can choose that "just right" text for each group.



Environment: small-group meeting area



Meeting students' instructional needs during guided reading

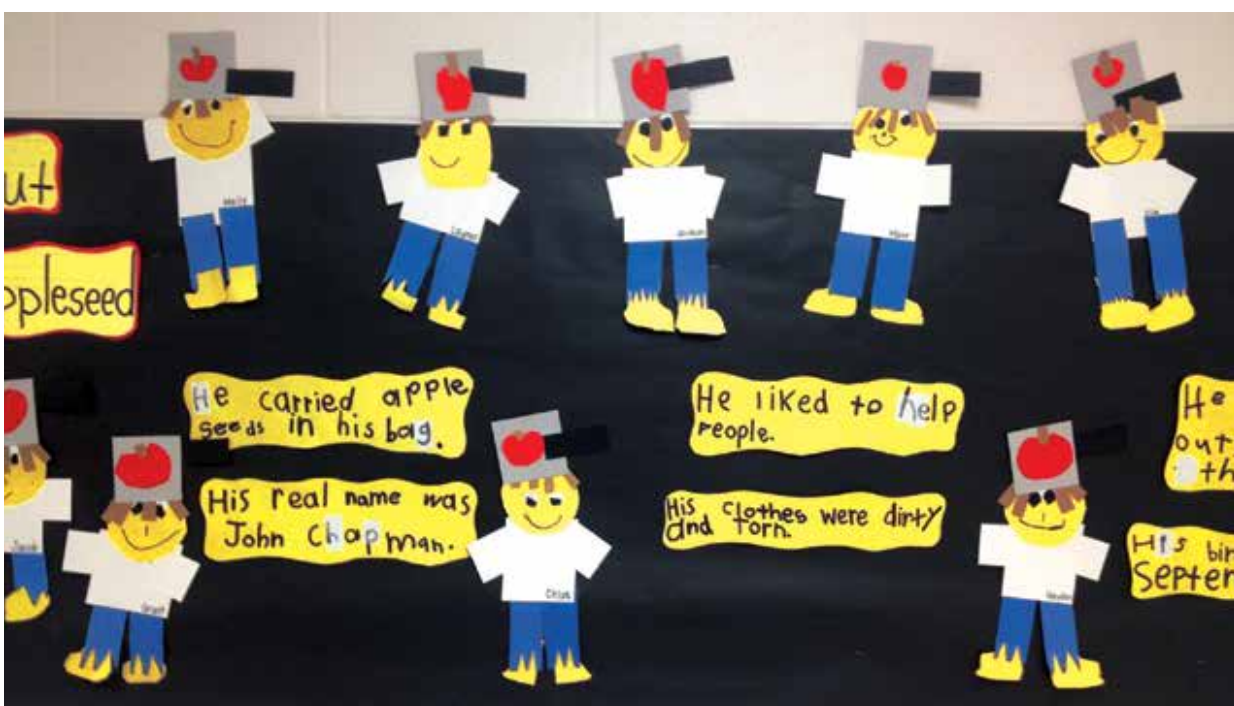


School book room with a variety of genre and text types organized by level and clearly labeled

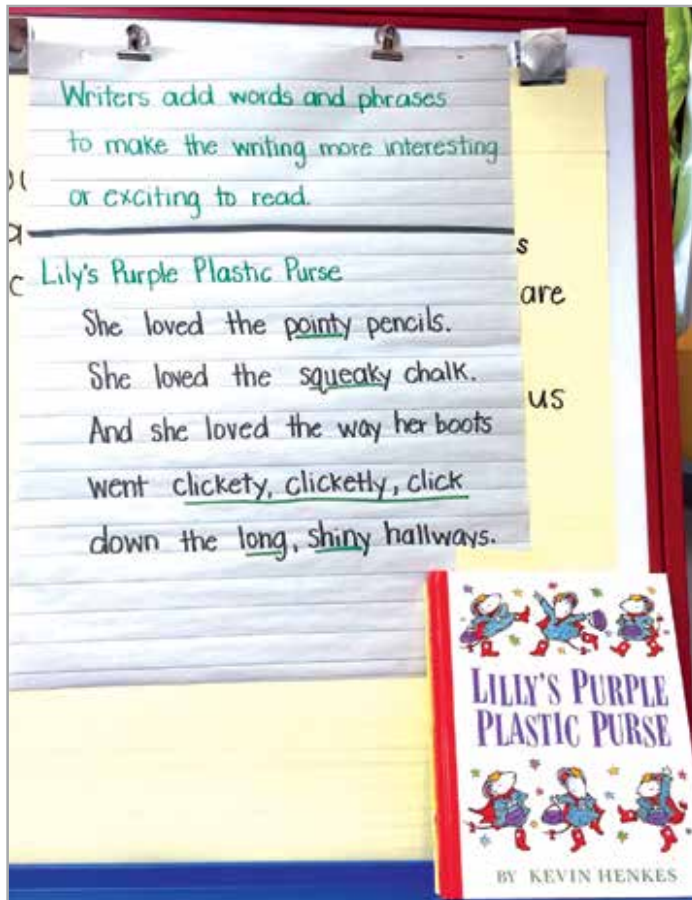
Section Four: Writing

Chapter 15 by Jenny McFerin and Nikki Woodruff details learning to write through interactive writing. This is a time to slow down the writing process and share the pen with students to work together to create a message and write the message as students contribute what they know about letters, sounds, and words during the writing. In Chapter 16, Sherry Kinzel offers multiple ways to collect assessment information about students as writers to inform instruction decisions. As you'll see in Chapters 17 and 18, such assessment is the basis for teacher decisions during Writing Workshop in the primary grades described by Jenny McFerin and in the intermediate grades written by Wendy Sheets.

You will find similarities across the two chapters in terms of creating mini-lessons, establishing routines for independent writing, conducting student conferences, and sharing. Writing Workshop begins with a mini-lesson on the writer's craft, a convention, or procedure, chosen by the teacher based on the needs of the class. Students then collect their writing materials and work on drafts of their writing while the teacher confers individually or pulls a small group together for some focused instruction. The workshop always ends with several students sharing their writing with the class.



Writing about reading
through interactive writing



Writing mini-lesson anchor charts constructed with students serve as visual mediators for independent learning

Independent writing





Independent writing

Writing conference



Conferring with
readers and writers



Section Five: Building Blocks of Language

Chapter 19 opens Section Five with an overview of phonics and word study by Carla Steele, Patricia Scharer, and Denise Rowe. The authors describe this essential component of the comprehensive literacy classroom in two important ways—1) explicit; and 2) embedded. Both instructional approaches are based on analysis of student data. Explicit word study occurs in large- or small-group settings; embedded word study is found across the framework in contexts such as guided reading, interactive writing, and independent writing.

Whole-group word study



Explicit word study block— phonics, spelling, and vocabulary are also embedded throughout the framework

In Chapter 20, Rob Drewry shares insights into increasing students' vocabularies by “vocabularying” your classroom and developing word consciousness. Gay Su Pinnell and Lynda Mudre close this section with Chapter 21, discussing the importance of explicitly teaching handwriting so students know how to efficiently and legibly make letters and words to facilitate their writing.

Section Six: A Learning Community: Students, Teachers, Principals, and Families

We close this book with a celebration of learning communities and their role in supporting reading and writing achievement. First, in Chapter 22, we examine how each classroom community can use inquiry to learn about working together to explore a topic through reading and writing. Sherry Kinzel, Wendy Sheets, and Carla Steele offer examples of inquiry into genre, famous people, and other topics that engage student interest. Such studies not only develop stronger classroom communities but also provide important authentic opportunities for reading and writing.



Science inquiry interactive writing

John McCarrier and Gay Su Pinnell explore the school-home connection and the importance of home libraries in Chapter 23. John writes about the KEEP BOOKS he has authored and how he talks about his writing with students during author visits. The children in the picture below are enjoying their KEEP BOOKS at school. The books go home with the children to ensure that they have books to read, enjoy, and learn from with their families.



KEEP BOOKS
for independent
reading





Coaching conversation



Literacy team

In Chapter 24, Marsha Levering explores reflections as a coach, staff developer, and teacher, helping you think about how such collegial reflection can support teacher development and student achievement. Through joint inquiry, teachers and coaches can work together analyzing data and planning lessons to maximize student learning.

The last two chapters, 25 and 26, are written by two principals, David Hensinger and Jason Hillman. Both have important ideas about how to develop a school-wide community which supports comprehensive literacy through shared decision-making, self-evaluation, and celebrations of learning.

Readers will find book lists and helpful documents in the appendix and also online, in addition to instructional videos, at Scholastic.com/RLResources.

Happy reading!

Patricia L. Schen