

Content Area Reading

Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum

E I G H T H E D I T I O N

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We choose *friends*, not *relatives*

How blessed we are to have these
special persons who are both

Fred and Pat Vacca

Tony and Chris Vacca

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Preface

Uhen we began writing *Content Area Reading* more than twenty-five years ago, we decided to set the tone of the first edition in the opening chapter by quoting a line from Simon and Garfunkel’s “Kodachrome.” Although we run the risk of dating ourselves, we are reminded of the provocative line because it captures the disconnect that many students have felt in their school experience, then as well as now. The opening lyrics to “Kodachrome” are a songwriter’s personal reflection on education—nothing more, nothing less. Yet the juxtaposition of having learned “crap” in school with the inability to “think” critically represents an ongoing dilemma faced by content area teachers who are wedded to an academic discipline.

We have never met a teacher who didn’t believe that the essence of artful teaching is in showing students how to think deeply and critically about the content underlying an academic discipline. Yet, when *content* is taught in a vacuum without attention to the *process* by which it is learned, students are apt to make few connections between the powerful ideas underlying an academic discipline and the prior knowledge and experience that they bring to classroom learning situations. In this book, we explore the relationships between content and process by critically examining the literacy processes and strategies that students use to think and learn with texts.

Major Themes in the Eighth Edition

Influenced by the role of language, cognition, culture, and social context in learning, our goal for this edition is to inspire teachers, whether novice or veteran, to examine what it means to connect literacy and learning in a standards-based curriculum. The eighth edition continues the ambitious exploration of *content literacy*—the ability to use reading, writing, talking, listening, and viewing processes to learn subject matter across the curriculum. The major themes underlying content literacy and learning are reflected in the organizing principles described at the beginning of every chapter:

- All teachers play a critical role in helping students comprehend and respond to information and ideas in the text.
- Instructional assessment is a process of gathering and using multiple sources of relevant information about students for instructional purposes.

- Teachers respond to the literacy needs of struggling readers and writers by scaffolding instruction so that students become confident and competent in the use of strategies that support learning.
- Teachers respond to linguistic and cultural differences in their classrooms by scaffolding instruction in the use of vocabulary and comprehension strategies and by creating classroom environments that encourage talking and working together.
- Instructional practices involving the use of informational and literary trade books in content areas help to extend and enrich the curriculum.
- Electronic texts, like trade books, extend and enrich the curriculum.
- Bringing students and texts together involves instructional plans and activities that result in active student engagement and collaboration.
- Teaching words well means giving students multiple opportunities to develop vocabulary knowledge and to learn how words are conceptually related to one another in the texts that they study.
- Activating prior knowledge and generating interest create an instructional context in which students will approach reading with purpose and anticipation.
- Teachers guide reader–text interactions through the instructional strategies and practices that they use and the reading support that they provide.
- Writing facilitates learning by helping students to explore, clarify, and think deeply about the ideas they encounter in reading.
- Looking for and using text structure in everything they read helps students to study texts more effectively.

Underlying these themes is our belief that students learn *with* texts, not necessarily *from* texts. Learning from texts suggests that a text is a body of information to be mastered by learners rather than a tool by which they construct meaning and knowledge. Learning with a text, on the other hand, implies that students have much to contribute to their own learning as they interact with texts to make meaning and construct knowledge.

Organization of the Eighth Edition

The knowledge base related to content literacy and learning has changed dramatically in the past twenty-five years, and so has thinking about what constitutes “best practice.” Nevertheless, in making decisions related to changes in this edition, we ask the same question that guided the writing of the first edition twenty-five years ago: How can teachers make content literacy a visible part of their instructional routines without sacrificing high standards for content learning?

Answers to this guiding question led us to reorganize the eighth edition into three parts: Part One: Content Literacy in a Standards-Based Curriculum, Part Two: Learners and Texts, and Part Three: Instructional Strategies and Practices.

Part One situates issues and problems related to content literacy within the context of the standards-based movement and accountability systems that are changing the face of education in today's U.S. schools. Although the pressure to ensure that students meet content standards weighs heavily on instructional decisions, a teacher can make a difference in students' literacy development and knowledge acquisition by showing them how to use literacy processes and strategies to meet high standards for learning. Ongoing, authentic assessment in the classroom—when coupled with high-stakes proficiency assessment—provides the information that teachers need to inform their day-by-day instructional decisions about content literacy and learning.

In Parts Two and Three of this edition, we build an instructional framework for content literacy and learning across the curriculum. In Part Two, Learners and Texts, our emphasis is on the exploration and clarification of issues related to struggling readers and writers, culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and the use of trade books and electronic texts to extend and enrich the curriculum. Students who continually struggle with text in reading and writing situations need to build strategic knowledge, skills, and insights related to literacy and learning. Moreover, culturally and linguistically diverse students present a unique challenge to content area teachers, especially in light of the influx of immigrant students in today's classrooms. We also examine the limitations of textbooks and explain how to use trade books and information and communication technologies such as the Internet to extend and enrich a standards-based curriculum.

In Part Three, Instructional Strategies and Practices, we flesh out the instructional framework by explaining how to create active learning environments in which all students—alone and in collaboration with one another—know how to use content literacy strategies to learn with texts. To this end, Part Three offers a multitude of instructional strategies and practices that allow teachers to scaffold instruction in ways that support the following:

- development of vocabulary knowledge and concepts;
- activation of prior knowledge before, during, and after reading;
- comprehension and critical analysis of text through reader–text interactions;
- use of various writing activities to facilitate learning; and
- development of study strategies based on a search for text structure in everything that students read.

These instructional strategies and practices are designed to engage students in their strategic interactions with text and other learners. Rather than left to “sink or swim” with a text assignment, students will be more likely to know how to search for meaning in everything they talk about, listen to, and read, view, and write.

among the important ideas presented in each chapter. A set of questions at the start of the chapter helps readers approach the text in a critical **Frame of Mind** as they analyze and interpret information presented in each chapter.

End-of-chapter features include **Minds On** and **Hands On** activities. Minds On activities engage students individually and collaboratively in thinking more deeply about some of the important ideas that they have studied. Hands On activities engage students individually and collaboratively in applying some of the important ideas that they have studied.

New Features

New features to this edition include marginal notations and “boxed” text segments that highlight issues related to content standards and assessment, procedures for research-based best practices, and connections between chapter content and diverse learners.

- What about Content Standards and Assessment?** Boxes positioned throughout most of the chapters. These boxes are designed to emphasize relationships between chapter content and issues/implications related to academic standards and high-stakes state proficiency assessments as well as authentic assessments in the classroom.
- Research-Based Best Practices.** Boxes positioned throughout most of the chapters relating to instructional strategies and practices. These boxes highlight the steps and applications involved in using high-visibility strategies that are supported by theoretically sound rationales and/or evidence-based research.
- What About Struggling Readers and English Language Learners?** Boxes positioned occasionally in several of the chapters to augment the content presented in separate chapters on struggling readers and linguistically diverse learners.
- Response Journal.** The Response Journal marginal icon signals readers to use a journal while reading to make personal and professional connections as they react to ideas presented in each chapter.

Frame of Mind

1. Why are today's classrooms more diverse than they were several decades ago?
2. What are some of the cultural and linguistic differences that students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds bring to classroom learning situations?
3. Why do English language learners struggle with content literacy tasks, and how does sheltered instruction make content more accessible to them while providing additional language support?
4. How can teachers scaffold instruction to develop vocabulary-building strategies for diverse learners?
5. How are the questioning the author (QCA) strategy and the directed reading-thinking activity (DRTA) similar? How are they different?
6. Why is classroom talk especially important to English language learners, and how can teachers create an environment for discussion in their classrooms?

Response Journal

As you read this chapter, think about how you might use the strategies and techniques you learn to help your students. Write in your journal about your thoughts and experiences.

What about Content Standards and Assessment?

Knowing how to use information and communication technology (ICT) skills and strategies is important to the success of our students. It is important to develop the ability to use ICT skills in the context of their academic work. The International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) are explicit in their standards for ICT use in the classroom.

Students will demonstrate the ability to use ICT to develop literacy skills. Students will demonstrate the ability to use ICT to develop literacy skills. Students will demonstrate the ability to use ICT to develop literacy skills.

Research-Based Best Practices

Graphic Organizers

To enhance students to various kinds of graphic organizers that may be applicable to their content area. Some of the following are:

- Present an example of a graphic organizer that corresponds to the text. Suggest one way to use it in class.
- Present an example of a graphic organizer that corresponds to the text. Suggest one way to use it in class.
- Present an example of a graphic organizer that corresponds to the text. Suggest one way to use it in class.

ELL and Struggling Readers?

Modified Cloze Passages and OPIN

Students who struggle with text to have limited cloze proficiency may benefit from content-related activities. To work on their content-related reading, they can use modified cloze passages and OPIN.

Modified Cloze Passages

Cloze passages (discussed in Chapter 2) are modified reading passages that have some content-related words removed. To work on their content-related reading, they can use modified cloze passages and OPIN.

- **eResources.** The eResources marginal icon directs readers to the Companion Website to search for Web links, Web activities, or suggested readings to engage in further learning about the topics presented in each chapter. There are also additional eResources at the end of each chapter directing students to the Companion Website for more activities and suggested readings, as well as articles from the *New York Times*.

Supplements for Instructors and Students

Allyn and Bacon is committed to preparing the best quality supplements for its textbooks, and the supplements for the eighth edition of *Content Area Reading* reflect this commitment. For more information about the instructor and student supplements that accompany and support the text, ask your local Allyn & Bacon representative, or contact the Allyn & Bacon Sales Support Department (1-800-852-8024).

- **Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank** with teaching suggestions and test items for each chapter.
- **PowerPoint™ Presentation.** Ideal for lecture presentations or student hand-outs, the PowerPoint™ presentation created for this text provides dozens of ready-to-use graphic and text images (available for download from Supplement Central at www.suppscentral.ablongman.com).
- **Companion Website** (www.ablongman.com/vacca8e) that provides online practice tests, activities, and additional Web resources to deepen and expand understanding of the text.
- **VideoWorkshop**, a new way to bring video into your course for maximized learning! This total teaching and learning system includes quality video footage on an easy-to-use CD-ROM plus a Student Learning Guide and an Instructor's Teaching Guide. The result? A program that brings textbook concepts to life with ease and that helps your students understand, analyze, and apply the objectives of the course. VideoWorkshop is available for your students as a value-pack option with this textbook. (Special package ISBN required from your representative.) VW will eventually become part of an exciting new package online called "My Lab School" currently under construction. Watch for details.
- **My Lab School.** Discover where the classroom comes to life! From video clips of teachers and students interacting to sample lessons, portfolio templates, and standards integration, Allyn and Bacon brings your students the tools they'll need to succeed in the classroom—with content easily integrated into your existing course. Delivered within Course Compass, Allyn and Bacon's course management system, this program gives your students powerful insights into how real classrooms work and a rich array of tools that will support them on their journey from their first class to their first classroom.
- **Allyn and Bacon Digital Media Archive for Literacy.** This CD-ROM offers still images, video clips, audio clips, Web links, and assorted lecture resources that can be incorporated into multimedia presentations in the classroom.

- **Professionals in Action: Literacy Video.** This 90-minute video consists of 10- to 20-minute segments on Phonemic Awareness, Teaching Phonics, Helping Students Become Strategic Readers, Organizing for Teaching with Literature, and discussions of literacy and brain research with experts. The first four segments provide narrative along with actual classroom teaching footage. The final segments present, in a question-and-answer format, discussions by leading experts in the field of literacy.
- **Allyn and Bacon Literacy Video Library.** Featuring renowned reading scholars Richard Allington, Dorothy Strickland, and Evelyn English, this three-video library addresses core topics covered in the literacy classroom: reading strategies, developing literacy in multiple intelligences classrooms, developing phonemic awareness, and much more.

Acknowledgments

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This book is only as good as the editors behind it. We owe a debt of gratitude to our Acquisitions Editor, Aurora Martínez, whose graceful guidance and incisive leadership on this project made us work harder than we wanted to. And special kudos to Tom Jefferies, the finest and steadiest developmental editor with whom we have had the pleasure to work thus far.

A special thanks to students, colleagues, and teachers in schools throughout the United States and Canada, too numerous to list, who have contributed immeasurably to our growth as teachers and scholars. This book has been a marriage-of-sorts for us and it's time to celebrate our silver anniversary with this edition's time cycle! Never in our dreams did we think it possible, and we thank a Power greater than ourselves for making it a reality.

R. T. V.
J. L. V.

Vocabulary lies at the heart of content learning. To support the development of vocabulary in the content areas, teachers need to give their students time to read widely, intentionally select words worthy of instruction, model their own word solving strategies, and provide students with opportunities to engage in collaborative conversations. The reading associated with content area courses reflects not only the concepts and ideas important to these subjects, but also the text structures used by those practicing the field. How are Content Area Texts Different Than Literature? Since most of the texts used in these subject areas are expository (informational) they require their readers to use different strategies for reading and comprehending them than they employ when reading literature. Consider the differences between a novel and a social studies textbook. ContentAreaReading(Content Area Reading: Literacy Learning Across the Curriculum)(with MyEducationLab) (10th Edition) [Hardcover](2010)byRichard T. Vacca,Jo Anne L. Vacca,Maryann E. Mraz. T. Hardcover.Â The Vacca and Vacca Content Area Reading book is the most cited text on teaching reading in the content areas.