Literacy Development in the Early Years

Helping Children Read and Write

Lesley Mandel Morrow

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey



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About the Author



LESLEY MANDEL MORROW is a distinguished professor of literacy at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education, where she is director of the Center for Literacy Development. She began her career as a classroom teacher, then became a reading specialist, and later received her Ph.D. from Fordham University in New York City. Her area of research deals with early literacy development and the organization and management of language arts programs. Her research is carried out with children and families from diverse backgrounds.

Dr. Morrow has more than 300 publications, including journal articles, book chapters, monographs, and books. She has received Excellence in Research, Teaching, and Service Awards from Rutgers University. She was the recipient of the International Literacy Association (ILA) Outstanding Teacher Educator of Reading Award and the William S. Gray Citation of Merit, and the IRA (now ILA) Special Service Award. She also received Fordham University's Alumni Award for Outstanding Achievement. In addition, Dr. Morrow has received numerous grants for research from the federal government and has served as a principal research investigator for the Center of English Language Arts, the National Reading Research Center, and the Center for Early Reading Achievement. She was an elected member of the board of directors and president of the International Literacy Association (ILA), an organization at the time of her presidency of 80,000 educators from 100 countries. Dr. Morrow was elected into the Reading Hall of Fame and was president of the Hall of Fame as well. In 2010 she received the Literacy Research Association's Oscar Causey Award for research that has added knowledge to and caused change in literacy practice.

Dr. Morrow is proud of the Center for Literacy Development that she created, and the work it has done. She has provided professional development for the Rutgers Reading Club and after-school program for struggling readers, which is training she created with Susan Dougherty. Dr. Morrow, has also provided professional development at conferences she organized with well-known speakers from around the country and abroad. Most recently, she works with pediatricans from Rutgers Medical School on the Reach Out and Read Organization. They do research to help children from "at risk" backgrounds and share information with pediatricians on how they can help with literacy in their practice. In addition, she is the proud grandmother of James Ethan and Natalie Kate.

List of Contributors

Christina Boyland is a sixth grade Language Arts Teacher in Bernards Township, NJ. She takes pride in her work of teaching students to read and write on a daily basis, while emphasizing the importance of individual creativity. Christina has created a welcoming classroom environment that encourages her students to collaborate and express themselves in ways that go beyond books. While she enjoys the challenges and new learnings that come with teaching Middle School, Christina has a dream, now goal, to become a Reading Specialist. She hopes to help elementary students develop a strong and ongoing appreciation for literature as they grow into young individuals both inside and outside the classroom.



Dr. Jennifer Renner Del Nero is an Assistant Professor with the Special Education, Language and Literacy Department at The College of New Jersey (Ewing, NJ) where she teaches literacy education to pre-service teachers. She has numerous articles published in The Reading Teacher, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, and Reading Improvement. Dr. Del Nero has presented at numerous national conferences and previously served as a literacy coach and teacher in NJ public schools.



Lucia Oubina Laka is an ESL instructional coach for kindergarten through 8th grade for the Red Bank Borough Public Schools. She supports teachers by helping them implement strategies to meet the needs of their English Language Learners. A large part of Lucia's role includes training teachers to use the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) instructional model. Leading workshops for cohorts of teachers, Lucia then follows up with coaching visits to model SIOP strategies in various classrooms and observes how teachers utilize SIOP strategies. Additionally, Lucia supports the ESL teachers at the primary school through the implementation of a vertical professional learning community (PLC).



Pooja Rajan is a graduate student at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education and is currently enrolled in the 5-Year Elementary Education (K-6) with Preschool through Grade 3 (P-3) Certification dual program. She will receive a master's degree along with a Special Education endorsement in May 2019. She has been working under Dr. Lesley Morrow for the past year, leading to her newfound passion in Literacy. In January 2018, she along with other graduate students took a trip to Yucatán, Mexico, where she collaborated with the UADY School of Education in efforts to engage in projects with Mexican pre-service teachers through conversation cafes and community-based education. She has been a substitute teacher in the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District as she completes her graduate studies and truly enjoys any opportunity she has to inspire children. Pooja has a passion for teaching and hopes to better our educational system and continue on this endeavor throughout her career.



Stephanie Rosato is a fifth grade English Language Arts teacher in Edison, New Jersey. She supports readers and writers through the implementation of a balanced literacy program encompassing Reading Workshop, Writing Workshop, and Word Study. Through the balanced literacy approach, Ms. Rosato fosters a literature rich environment, where students acquire the necessary skills to increase comprehension. She also encourages students to build strong reading lives, and works hard to inspire a love of reading within each child. As a teacher, Ms. Rosato understands the tremendous impact reading makes on a child. Therefore, the next step within her career is to achieve a Reading Specialist Certification that will allow her to provide further individualized and focused instruction to young readers and writers who need extra support and motivation.



Melissa Stawicki is an Interventionist at Bloomfield High School, where she works with students and teachers in need of support and oversees a variety of student programs. Previously, she taught English Language Arts to students in grades nine through twelve for more than a decade. Melissa has presented at multiple conferences throughout the country on topics in literacy and educational leadership. She holds two master's degrees in leadership and is currently a doctoral candidate in Literacy Education at Rutgers University.



Foreword

Lished in its first edition in 1989. With the publication of this ninth edition, it has now been in print for 30 years. New features were added to each of the previous editions, as they are in this new edition. In the ninth edition, material dealing with what was research-based best practice 30 years ago was retained, and other material was updated based on current research, policy, and practice. This book was one of the first on the topic of early literacy and has prevailed as one of the most utilized texts of its kind in the country.

The first edition of *Literacy Development in the Early Years* appeared when research on emergent literacy was just beginning to be implemented. We once thought that children learned to speak and listen during their early years and later learned to read and write at 6 and 7 years of age. We also believed that early childhood was a time to learn to read and the elementary grades were a time to read to learn. We now know that children begin to develop early forms of language and literacy ability concurrently and from the day they are born. We now know that learning to read and reading to learn go hand in hand. We have discovered that excellent strategies are good for all children at all ages. Excellent literacy instruction is created in literacy-rich environments in social contexts through immersion in literacy experiences, explicit instruction, practice, and modeling by teachers—all with constructive feedback. Lesley Mandel Morrow based her book on her own research as well as that of others and her practical experience as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, researcher, mother, and now grandmother. She took a look at historical theories and philosophies about how children learn. As time passed and policy changes in teaching reading were legislated, Morrow took these developments into account and shared this very important information. With these new laws came new challenges, especially in the area of testing. There is a great deal about assessment in this edition so that teachers can assess children's needs by doing a case study with all materials in this new volume.

English learners (ELs) make up a large portion of our school population. Morrow has added more material to the chapter covering diversity and has incorporated the label, *Teaching English Learners*, to call out specific activities throughout the book that work particularly well with children who are English learners. Morrow demonstrates the value of involving children in many types of language and literacy experiences. She provides insightful examples of children's approximations of writing and reading as she establishes the necessity of giving them unlimited opportunities to practice. Further, she illustrates the ways in which adults provide models, explicit instruction, and feedback for young learners as they attempt to read and write. Morrow takes a comprehensive perspective toward literacy instruction by selecting the best techniques based on sound learning theories, such as a constructivist model with a problem-solving approach to more explicit instruction.

Children's literature plays an important role in Lesley's literacy environment. Literature serves as a model for language learning and provides strong motivation for learning to read and write. It is a springboard for many literacy-related activities. Most important, literature is a way of knowing. It is shaped around story whether it is narrative or expository—a primary act of human minds. She is also aware that in early literacy development, materials designed for instructional purposes are necessary for skill development and to attain national, state, and local standards for literacy learning.

Dr. Morrow recognizes the importance of parents, siblings, grandparents, and other caregivers reading to children and enjoying books together. She shows how reading to babies influences their grasp of language and story patterns that serve them well as they learn to read and write. She illustrates how children learn concepts about print, book handling, and conventions of stories as they interact with books. She establishes that adults teach by example as they enjoy shared reading and shared writing with children. She shows the impact of having a literacy center in a classroom and the effects of storybook reading aloud by a teacher. She illustrates that when children know authors and illustrators as real people, they want to read their work and write in a manner similar to them. Morrow states that storytelling is similar to reading aloud in its impact on children. She also recognizes the necessity of skills that involve learning concepts about print and books. For example, children need to develop phonological and phonemic awareness, alphabetic principles, and phonics for reading success. They also must learn to construct meaning from text by learning strategies for comprehension. Speaking from her own experiences as a teacher, researcher, parent, and grandparent, Morrow charts a path that leads to successful literacy learning.

Lesley has taken a long view of literacy development in the early years, showing its historical roots. She also knows and draws on the research of today's leaders because she is a member of that research community. She succinctly summarizes language theories and relates current research to shape sound practices. She has conducted much of the original research herself, testimony to the fact that she can bridge the gap among theory, research, and practice. Her examples are anchored in real class-room experiences—her own and those of other teachers with whom she works collaboratively. The examples are authentic and add credibility to the content of this book.

Morrow spends a significant amount of time on organizing and managing language arts throughout the day. In case studies and outlines, she takes the reader step by step to show what exemplary literacy instruction looks like. This edition puts a great deal of emphasis on the use of technology in the early childhood literacy classroom, differentiated instruction, response to intervention, and content-area literacy instruction. She has added information about looking at schools as "Communities of Learning" that have a positive mindset for success. She addresses the need for teachers to look at the social, emotional, physical and intellectual parts of a child and what that means for literacy instruction. Her book is filled with photographs, figures, and illustrations that take the reader into classrooms, and reproducible strategies for the classroom are sprinkled throughout the book. There also are online video clips where students can see strategies come to life in the classroom.

Lesley Morrow's treatment of literacy development is on the cutting edge of current knowledge. She is well informed about her subject and makes connections among all aspects of literacy learning. She is a sensitive observer and writer, letting children and teachers speak for themselves through their work.

Dr. Morrow states that few children learn to love books by themselves. Someone must lure them into the wonderful world of the written word. She shows us how to do that and enriches our lives and the lives of children through her work. Her contribution to the literacy development of children from birth through grade 3 is a lasting one.

Linda B. Gambrell, Ph.D. Distinguished Professor of Education Clemson University Distinguished Professor Emeritus

Preface

Liting iteracy Development in the Early Years, ninth edition, is for teachers, reading specialists, administrators, students in teacher education programs, and parents. It is appropriate for graduate, undergraduate, and professional development courses in early literacy, and it complements texts on teaching reading in the elementary school, children's literature, child development, early childhood curriculum, and teaching language arts.

I wrote the book because of my special interest in literacy development in early childhood. I taught in preschool, kindergarten, and the primary grades; I was a reading specialist; and then I taught early childhood curriculum and literacy courses at the university level. My research has focused on instructional strategies in early literacy. Over the years, research in early literacy has generated new theory. It has implications for new instructional strategies and reinforces older practices based on little or no research to establish their validity. The book describes a program that nurtures literacy development from birth through third grade.

The ideas in the book are based on research. They have been tried and they have worked, but not all are appropriate for all teachers or all children. The good teacher functions most effectively with strategies he or she feels most comfortable with. The teacher needs to be a decision maker who thinks critically about the design of his or her literacy program and the selection of materials. Children come to school with diverse social, emotional, physical, and intellectual abilities and achievement levels. They have diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and exposures to literacy. All must be addressed appropriately.

Underlying this book is the merging of the art and the science of teaching. The science involves theories based on research findings that have generated instructional strategies. The book is also based on current standards for teaching literacy and current policy. Most of the book contains descriptions of strategies and steps for carrying them out. But the research does not necessarily take into account individual differences among teachers and children. The art of teaching concentrates on those human variables. This book provides a comprehensive and balanced approach to early literacy instruction. Constructivist ideas that involve problem-solving techniques are blended with explicit direct instructional approaches so that teachers can decide what works best for the children they teach. There is a strong emphasis on learning to read through the integration of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. There is also a strong emphasis on the integration of these literacy skills into content-area learning. Differentiation of instruction is a major theme. That theme suggests that teaching must be directed to the individual needs of every child and, in addition, there is a strong emphasis on the diverse nature of children.

Chapter Organization

Chapter 1 places you in an early childhood classroom immediately. Its purpose is to provide you with an exemplary model of excellent literacy instruction. It provides the student with a look at what can be in an excellent early literacy classroom. It lays the groundwork for the rest of the book, which looks at each part of an exemplary literacy day.

Chapter 2 provides a framework of theory, research, and policy from the past and present that has influenced strategies for developing early literacy.

Chapter 3 covers the important issues of assessment and provides you with concepts for authentic assessment, portfolio assessment, and standardized assessment. This chapter emphasizes how assessment must guide instruction and how they are connected. With this philosophy in mind, strategies for assessment are integrated into all chapters. There is also a look at standards to see how they influence what we teach.

Chapter 4 is about the diversity in our classrooms. The chapter has been expanded because of the diverse nature of our classrooms. There is an emphasis on English learners (ELs) as well as discussions of special learning needs such as learning disabilities, physical disabilities, gifted children, and others. This chapter provides strategies for teaching children who are diverse in many ways. However, meeting the needs of these individuals is a special focus throughout the book.

Chapters 5 through 10 deal with emergent literacy skills and strategies, oral language and vocabulary development, word study, comprehension, and writing. These chapters discuss theory and research—specifically, developmental trends, instructional strategies, and methods for assessment. The book views the development of literacy skills (reading, writing, oral language, listening, and viewing) as concurrent and interrelated; the development of one enhances the development of the others. Furthermore, the theories, stages, acquisition, and strategies associated with each are similar, and it is difficult to separate them entirely. To make the volume more readable, however, I have treated the various areas of literacy in different chapters.

Chapter 11 places a strong emphasis on the importance of children's literature in literacy development as well as creating rich literacy centers in classroom.

Chapter 12 focuses on motivation through the integration of literacy throughout the school day. The topics discussed are technology and literacy, content areas and literacy, and playfulness in school. Thematic instruction and project-based instruction are discussed.

Chapter 13 provides the organization and management of the components presented in the book that are organized to create a successful program. The best strategies will fall apart if the school day is not organized well. Ways of scheduling the school day are discussed, as well as descriptions of how to organize whole-group, small-group, and individualized instruction. An area of extreme importance to teachers is how children can learn to work independently at centers while teachers instruct small groups to meet achievement needs. This is accomplished through differentiation of instruction.

Chapter 14 discusses the strong influence of the home on the development of literacy, especially in a child's earliest years. It discusses broad perspectives concerning family literacy, such as integrated home and school programs, intergenerational programs, and sensitivity to cultural differences to provide programs that are not intrusive but build on the strengths of the families being served.

Each chapter begins with expected outcomes to focus on while reading the text. Important vocabulary in the chapter is listed at the beginning of each chapter. The questions and vocabulary are followed by theory and research, a great deal of practice and assessment. Each chapter has multiple and reproducible strategies throughout. The chapters end with a summary that focuses on the expected outcomes with questions and activities for further study. The appendices supplement the text with lists of materials that teachers use in carrying out a successful program to develop early literacy. Appendix E offers the instructor ideas for his or her college classroom. Key words dealing with early literacy development are defined in the glossary at the end of the book.

What's New in the Ninth Edition

New features of the ninth edition include the following:

- There are 14 chapters instead of 10 in this edition. The purpose was to make chapters shorter with less information but more targeted information in each one. This was done to make the book more student-friendly. New chapters are Chapter 5, Early Childhood Language Development: Birth to Age 2; Chapter 6, Language and Vocabulary Development: Preschool Through Grade 3; Chapter 7, Emergent Literacy Skills and Strategies: Helping Children Figure Out Words; and, Chapter 8, Phonological Awareness and Phonics Instruction.
- There is an emphasis on creating a community of learners in literacy instruction by embracing a positive mindset of "You can do it," "We can do it" and "I will do it".
- There is an emphasis on the use of informational text, integration of literacy throughout the curriculum, a look at close reading, and text complexity.
- More strategies than ever before are embedded within the book followed by vignettes to illustrate how to put them into practice.
- Appendix B provides a new Integrated Language Arts Thematic Unit entitled Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds. This unit not only covers content to encourage healthy living but identifies how to seamlessly integrate reading and writing strategies into lesson planning and meet Common Core standards.
- Continued emphasis is placed on research and policy in early literacy development, including findings from the National Reading Panel, the National Early Literacy Panel, Preventing Reading Difficulties, Reading First, the Rand Report, the implications of the No Child Left Behind legislation, Race to the Top, and the Common Core State Standards.
- Updated photographs, as well as tables and illustrations enhance the text.
- There are additional strategies for developing literacy in writing workshops, reading workshops, independent and partner reading, organizational methods, and comprehension development.
- Appendices for children's literature, early literacy software, and multiple websites for teachers and children have been updated.
- There are additional assessment tools for carrying out a very complete case study
 of a child's abilities and needs in literacy development and an emphasis on assessment guided instruction.
- Emphasis is placed on school relevance and motivation.
- There is a strong focus on how to organize children with similar needs for small-group instruction.

MyLab Education

One of the most visible changes in the ninth edition, and also one of the most significant, is the expansion of the digital learning and assessment resources embedded in the eText and the inclusion of MyLab Education in the text. MyLab Education is an online homework, tutorial, and assessment program designed to work with the text to engage learners and to improve learning. Within its structured environment, learners see key concepts demonstrated through real classroom video footage, practice what they learn, test their understanding, and receive feedback to guide their learning and to ensure their mastery of key learning outcomes. Designed to bring learners more directly into the world of K–12 classrooms and to help them see the real and powerful

impact of early literacy concepts covered in this book, the online resources in MyLab Education with the Enhanced eText include:

- Video Examples. About two or three times per chapter, an embedded video provides an illustration of an early literacy principle or concept in action. These video examples most often show students and teachers working in classrooms, and sometimes they show students or teachers describing their thinking or experiences.
- Self-Checks. In each chapter, self-check quizzes help assess how well learners have mastered the content. The self-checks are made up of self-grading multiple-choice items that not only provide feedback on whether questions are answered correctly or incorrectly, but also provide rationales for both correct and incorrect answers.
- **Application Exercises.** These exercises give learners opportunities to practice applying the content and strategies from the chapters. The questions in these exercises are usually constructed response. Once learners provide their own answers to the questions, they receive feedback in the form of model answers written by experts.

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