Welcome to the second edition of my content area textbook! I am excited to share with you the latest ideas, strategies, and projects in the world of content area reading—particularly in this time of renewed emphasis on disciplinary literacies. In fact, you may have noticed that I've changed the title to Content Area Reading: Teaching and Learning for College and Career Readiness. Everything we value about multiple literacies is still included, but I've added information about the Common Core and how we can prepare our students to be college and career ready. I wrote this book because I believe that teaching in the disciplines is an exciting, innovative, student-centered practice. I believe that, as teachers, we have the knowledge and ability to motivate students to learn. I also think that by integrating what we know about best practice, student engagement, multiple literacies, reading as a thinking process, and innovative instructional techniques, we can provide a solid foundation for teaching and learning across the disciplines in the age of the Common Core.

This book is a unique addition to the existing list of content area texts because it is a Common Core–based, complete, student-centered resource for grades 6 through 12. It uses a series of features to help “make connections” between what students read and how they apply ideas in the classroom. This volume transitions theory into practice and offers a wide range of innovative instructional approaches. All of the teaching ideas presented in this book are taught using the steps of explicit instruction and the gradual release of responsibility to scaffold student learning. In addition, the book features student examples from many different disciplines and includes a broad variety of readily available teaching resources.

The central theme of this text is content area literacies and their effects on teaching and learning. In the past, being literate required only that we be able to read and write, but in today’s world, we need to be fluent in multiple literacies that require us not only to be able to read and write but also to understand a variety of disciplines, navigate myriad information sources, examine authors’ intentions, and comprehend beyond the printed page. Skills of the 21st century are also associated with the Common Core and multiple literacies, particularly information literacy and the use of the Internet. Chapters 2 and 11 integrate 21st-century skills into the teaching of content area reading. These skills range from generating questions to effectively searching a topic to using information and other literacies during research. Among other topics, the book highlights information about educational standards, comprehension strategies, teaching ideas, and innovative approaches. Resource-filled appendices are also included.

This new edition continues to be a resource you will use throughout your teaching career. It is a practical guide to teaching for understanding in the content areas at the middle and high school levels. It is a complete information source—a book that will emerge well-read and well-used over the years.

I should also tell you that I am a certified content area teacher, and whether you are inservice or preservice, I think of all of us as teachers. This is why I refer to us as “we” throughout the text. We are in this together. We will learn and then we will teach, encouraging our content area students to reach their greatest potentials, as we continue our quest to become the best possible teachers.
NEW TO THIS EDITION

There is also a great deal that is new in this edition:

- There is a new chapter on the Common Core, in which both the College and Career Readiness Standards and the Common Core State Standards are emphasized and “rich instructional tasks” are explained.
- To complement the chapter on the Common Core State Standards, there is a new “Making Connections to the Common Core” feature that appears throughout the text.
- The theoretical background information has been updated.
- The website resources have been revised.
- Numerous new student examples have been integrated.
- The appendices have been revitalized: They now include a variety of new graphic organizers that focus on using multimodal text and recognizing and creating text structures. The appendices also feature new examples of completed student projects.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book is organized in four sections. In Part One we begin by learning about our students and innovations in content area teaching. Then we explore multiple literacies (adolescent literacy, discipline-specific literacies, critical literacy, information literacy, media literacy, and multicultural literacy) and how we, as teachers, can help our students to actively participate in them. Next, we learn about the Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, the Common Core State Standards, and related assessments. We make connections between the standards and our teaching as we examine teacher-authored rich instructional tasks in which multiple standards are integrated.

Helping students learn course content is the focus of Part Two. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, we contemplate reading comprehension and learn about the repertoire of strategies that readers use to construct meaning as they think through text. We examine teaching ideas related to each strategy and student examples of each. We also discuss the literacy professionals who support us in our content area teaching. Next, in Chapter 7 we explore vocabulary, focusing on current best practices and ideas for teaching vocabulary effectively. In Chapter 8 we consider how to organize for learning and teach essential skills, such as generating and responding to questions, text structures, and study skills. This section of the book also introduces a lesson plan focused on engaging, guiding, and extending student thinking. In Chapter 9 we learn how to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students in content area classrooms.

In Part Three, we continue to focus on teaching our students how to actively engage in learning. We explore how to help them use writing to learn and to express their ideas in a variety of formats in Chapter 10. Then we focus on integrating technology in the content areas in Chapter 11. Inquiry, creativity, and multiple modes of representing thinking comprise Chapters 12 and 13. In Chapter 12 we explore inquiry-based learning, a project-oriented teaching method in which students generate questions to gain deeper understanding. Alternative modes of representation, such as poetry, drama, art, and music, are the focus of Chapter 13. These alternative modes permeate all content areas and provide students with unique ways to express their knowledge.

Assessment and professional development are the focus of Part Four. In Chapter 14 we learn about assessment that is dynamic, authentic, reflective, and standards based. In the final chapter, we explore how to become lifelong learners by experiencing success in our teaching, participating in mentoring programs, and engaging in professional development.

The appendices feature materials designed to support teaching and learning. The appendices are organized in six sections and include a variety of reproducible pages related to teaching comprehension-based ideas, skills, writing, checklists and rubrics, alternative modes of representation, and student projects. Student examples of several completed projects are also featured.
Throughout the book, special features focus on issues of importance to content area teachers. The features are designed to extend understanding of key concepts and to encourage us to think about the issues in greater depth.

Teaching Idea icons found throughout chapter margins highlight practical strategies to use across content areas. Teaching Ideas that are specific to fostering student comprehension feature five steps of explicit instruction: (1) explain, (2) demonstrate, (3) guide, (4) practice, and (5) reflect. The explicit instruction of the strategies is followed by applications of each strategy-based Teaching Idea within content-specific classroom examples. Student artifacts, student dialogues, and student writing samples show the real-life application of the Teaching Ideas.

Every chapter opens with a Chapter Overview highlighting Student Learning Outcomes—what the students will know and be able to do after learning the content, the key questions addressed within each chapter, and a complete list of the Teaching Ideas presented.
Chapters are supported by feature streams designed to enhance comprehension by “making connections”:

- **Making Connections to the Common Core** relates chapter content to the Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards and the Common Core State Standards.

- **Making Connections to Multiple Literacies** links chapter topics to aspects of different literacies, including adolescent literacy, discipline-specific literacies, critical literacy, information literacy, media literacy, and multicultural literacy.

- **Making Connections to Struggling Readers** applies chapter topics to issues associated with students who struggle to comprehend text, especially in the content areas.

- **Making Connections to English Learners** explores issues related to teaching English language learners.

- **Making Connections to Writing** links chapter topics to writing opportunities.

- **Making Connections to Study Skills** associates chapter topics with ideas for teaching study skills to support student learning.

- **Making Connections: Thinking About** boxes pose questions that encourage you to actively engage in learning by asking you to think about a response and to share your ideas with a small group.
Chapter Summaries at the end of each chapter provide a concise, bulleted list of the topics addressed.

Teaching Connections: Applying What We Have Learned includes the following sections:

- **E-Links** are annotated web links at the end of every chapter that give you an opportunity to explore chapter topics in greater depth.
- **Accountable Talk** provides ideas for small group discussions.
- **Portfolio/Performance Opportunity** sections at the end of each chapter are performance assessments that, when completed, may be included in your course portfolio.

The **Appendices** are practical, reproducible, idea-filled teaching resources that support a variety of topics addressed throughout the book. Examples featured include blackline masters, Discussion Circle Bookmarks, Double-Entry Journal formats, a Press Conference Checklist, a First-Person Experience Rubric, form poems, organizers for using multimodal text, and examples from projects such as the Content Area Resource Anthology, Student-Authored Electronic Books, and Transmediations.

**SUPPLEMENTS AND LEARNING AIDS**

The following resources are available for instructors to download on www.pearsonhighered.com/educator. Instructors enter the author or title of this book, select this particular edition of the book, and then click on the “Resources” tab to log in and download textbook supplements.
Resources for Instructors

INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL AND TEST BANK. The Instructor’s Manual and Test Bank includes a wealth of interesting ideas and activities designed to help instructors teach the course. Each chapter includes a chapter-at-a-glance grid, the chapter purpose, underlying concepts, learning objectives, vocabulary and key concepts, and activities and discussion questions for before, during, and after reading. The Test Bank includes short-answer, multiple-choice, and true/false questions that correspond to each chapter. Page references to the main text, suggested answers, and skill types have been added to each question to help instructors create and evaluate student tests.

TESTGEN COMPUTERIZED TEST BANK. The printed Test Bank is also available electronically through Pearson’s computerized testing system, TestGen. The user-friendly interface enables instructors to view, edit, and add questions, transfer questions to tests, and print tests in a variety of fonts. Search and sort features allow instructors to locate questions quickly and arrange them in any preferred order.

POWERPOINT™ PRESENTATION. Ideal for classroom presentations and student handouts, the PowerPoint™ Presentation created for this text provides instructors with key information from each chapter in an easy-to-use format.

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—MM
If you are reading this book, you are probably either a pre-service or inservice teacher of science, mathematics, social science, language, the arts, physical education, or some other content area. Chances are you have completed many course hours in your area of specialization and you are now very knowledgeable about your field. You know the content. You know how to plan and teach lessons. So you may find yourself wondering, “What could be left to learn?” The answer is an essential element of teaching and learning. You are going to learn how to teach your students to be strategic thinkers—to access texts, to question, and, ultimately, to create personal meaning. This book will build on all that you already know and deepen your understanding of your content area. It will enable you to see how strategic thinking can help your students to read texts and reason through issues.

Our job is to teach our discipline-specific content with the knowledge and expertise of those who fully understand the subject area, including the types of thinking and the literacies it involves. We will use what our students know about reading to help them think through the content areas. We will teach our students how to use multiple literacies, including discipline-specific literacies, information literacy, and critical literacy, to help them fully access and understand the content we teach. When we view reading this way—as a thinking process—it helps us and our students to understand at deeper levels.

Now that we know why we are taking this course and reading this book, you may be wondering, (1) “What are our goals?” (2) “What kinds of teachers will we strive to become?” (3) “What texts will we use?” (4) “What will we learn?” (5) “How will we begin?” (6) “How will our teaching support the Common Core State Standards?” (7) “How will constructivism support our teaching?” (8) “What roles will motivation and engagement play in our teaching?”
kinds of students will we teach?” (4) “What will we teach?” (5) “How will our teaching support the Common Core State Standards?” (6) “How will constructivism support our teaching?” (7) “What roles will motivation and engagement play in our teaching?” (8) “What kinds of texts will we use?” (9) “What will we learn?” and (10) “How will we begin?” All these questions and more are probably racing through your minds. Let’s begin our time together by responding to each of them.

What Are Our Goals?

As content area teachers, our overarching goal is to teach our students to the best of our abilities within the framework of best practice—that is, current research-based theories and beliefs that have been proven to be effective in the classroom. We will also make connections between best practice and the national and state standards that have been developed for our content area. (For a detailed discussion of the Common Core State Standards, see Chapter 3.)

Another goal we have is to engage our students in learning. We will embrace motivation and make it a part of everything we do. We will encourage our students to be active learners, and we will teach cutting-edge information in ways that will inspire our students. We will scaffold our students’ learning experiences so they become strong, independent thinkers. Finally, we will encourage our students to show what they know by using their knowledge and experience to support their performances.

We will expand our perception of context and view curriculum, activity, classroom environment, teaching, talk, text, and society as context (Duke, 2001). We will support the belief of researchers and practitioners that it is impossible to separate teaching and learning from the contexts in which they are taught (Cambourne, 2002).

Of course, reflection, integration, and discussion will permeate our teaching. We don’t want to teach our students to robotically regurgitate the information contained in texts. Instead, we will integrate multiple literacies and teach our students to be successful thinkers. They will analyze what they have learned in meaningful ways and reflect on what they have learned and how they applied their knowledge. Throughout this process, we will encourage our students to question, to ponder, and to make connections to their everyday life experiences.

What Kinds of Teachers Will We Strive to Become?

What does the research have to say about effective teachers? What qualities do we need to possess to successfully teach our content area? How do exceptional teachers characterize themselves? What is the theoretical framework from which they teach? In this segment of the chapter, we respond to these questions by examining the qualities of effective teachers and exploring how the constructivist theory of learning underpins their instruction.

Thinking about Our Teachers

- Think about your content area teachers. Who was the best content area teacher you ever had? What made learning with him or her memorable? What was it about his or her teaching that motivated you to learn? How did having this teacher influence your decision to teach? Share your thoughts in small-group discussions.

- Who was the worst content area teacher you ever had? What made learning with him or her such a negative experience? What could the teacher have done to make the experience better? How did having this teacher influence your decision to teach? Share your thoughts in small-group discussions.
The research has a great deal to say about the teachers we are striving to be. It describes them as “excellent” and “influential,” and notes that teachers are valued participants in the learning process. As the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1997) has reported, the single most important strategy for achieving the educational goals of the United States (and, indeed, for most countries) is to recruit, prepare, and support excellent teachers for every school.

Researchers as well as professional organizations have described the characteristics of influential teachers (International Reading Association, 2000; Ruddell, 1995, 2004). The following characterizations of such teachers integrate their perceptions.

Influential teachers believe that all students can learn. They base their teaching on the needs of the individual child. They strive to reach all students, including English learners and struggling readers. They know that motivation and multiple kinds of texts are essential elements of teaching and learning. They understand that reading is a social constructivist process that functions best in authentic situations. They teach in print-rich, concept-rich environments.

The teachers we are striving to become have in-depth knowledge of various aspects of learning. They teach for a variety of purposes, using diverse methods, materials, and grouping patterns to focus on students’ individual needs, interests, and learning styles. They know the strategies that good learners use, and they can teach students how to use them. They create experiences and environments that introduce, nurture, and extend students’ literacy abilities to engage with text. Their teaching frameworks include direct explanation, modeling, and scaffolding. They are aware of what is working well and what each student needs to be successful.

These teachers view their teaching as multifaceted, and they view themselves as participants in the learning process. They integrate their knowledge of the learning cycle, learning styles, and multiple intelligences into their teaching.

They understand the relationship between assessment and instruction, and they assess in multiple ways for a variety of purposes. They use instructional strategies that provide formative feedback to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and student performance. They know that assessment informs teaching as well as learning. They know that national policies, state standards, and state assessments contribute to the contexts in which they teach. (For more information about national and state standards, see Chapter 3.)

When asked which features they perceive as important to their teaching, influential teachers cite personal characteristics, understanding of learners’ potential, attitudes toward their subject areas, life adjustments, and the quality of their instruction. Their thoughts are featured in Figure 1.1 (Ruddell, 2004, p. 983).

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Thinking about Ourselves as Teachers

- Consider issues 1 and 3 from the list of influential teachers’ self-perceptions in Figure 1.1, and compare and contrast them with your own preservice/inservice self-perceptions.
- Focus on what you perceive to be your strengths; then consider areas in which you may need to improve.
- Share your thoughts with others in small-group discussions.

Whether the characteristics of influential teachers are derived from the perceptions of others or themselves, these teachers emerge as knowledgeable, thoughtful, well organized, creative, and actively engaged in the learning process. These teachers have the respect of students and colleagues. They are worthy models for those of us who strive to be successful teachers.

If we were to observe these teachers while they were engaged in instruction, we would notice that they

- Develop and use standards-based lesson plans underpinned by a sound instructional framework
Chapter 1  Teaching in the 21st Century

Figure 1.1  Influential Teachers’ Shared Beliefs about Teaching

1. Personal Characteristics
   - Have energy, commitment, and passion
   - Are warm and caring
   - Are flexible
   - Have high expectations of self

2. Understanding of Learner Potential
   - Are sensitive to individual needs, motivations, and aptitudes
   - Understand where students are developmentally
   - Place high demands on learners

3. Attitude toward Subject
   - Have enthusiasm
   - Create intellectual excitement
   - Consider alternative points of view

4. Life Adjustment
   - Show concern with students as persons
   - Are attentive to academic problems and personal problems

5. Quality of Instruction
   - Make material personally relevant
   - Stress basic communication: clear writing, comprehension of text, critical thinking
   - Develop logical and strategy-oriented instruction: (a) clear statement of problems, (b) use of familiar concrete examples, (c) extension to more abstract examples, (d) analysis of abstract concepts involved, and (e) application of concepts to new contexts
   - Assist in identifying issues that should be considered before conclusions are reached
   - Engage students in the process of intellectual discovery


- Motivate students and demonstrate high expectations for learning
- Activate and integrate students’ background knowledge and experiences in the construction of meaning
- Infuse higher-level thinking and questioning strategies into the learning experience
- Use inquiry-based learning and a variety of text types and levels to encourage intellectual discovery
- Encourage students to be active thinkers
- Involve the learning community in meaning negotiation
- Demonstrate sensitivity to individual students’ needs, motivations, and abilities
- Use a variety of instructional settings, including whole class, small groups, and pairs
- Assess in multiple ways for a variety of purposes (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002a; Ruddell, 1995, 2004)

These teachers possess extensive positive qualities, and the value of these qualities is clearly evident when we observe these teachers in the classroom. In subsequent chapters, we will more fully explore these aspects of instruction and integrate them into our teaching.
Chapter 1
What Kinds of Students Will We Teach?

Our students will be different from students of the past. We will teach the students of the 21st century, students who have been born into a digital age. They have never known a world without computers or the Internet. They have always had access to cell phones and text messaging and have always been able to download their favorite music to their computers and iPods. These students have always had access to traditional texts, such as books, magazines, newspapers, and electronic text either created by others or self-generated. These are the students of the 21st century, those whom many refer to as Millennials (Howe, 2005; Howe & Strauss, 2000, 2001; Moorman & Horton, 2007).

Howe and Strauss (2000) note that Millennials are the most educated and most diverse generation in history. They are optimists and team players, and they follow rules more readily and accept authority more easily than their parents did at their age. Further, Moorman and Horton (2007) point out:

Millennials bring to school a unique set of skills, knowledge, and attributes unlike any other in history. Today's adolescents read and write more, have a more realistic and broader view of the world, are more accomplished socially, and process information in fundamentally different ways than previous generations. (pp. 264–265)

According to Howe and Strauss (2000), Millennials have seven distinguishing characteristics: They are special, sheltered, confident, team oriented, achieving, pressured, and conventional. When describing Millennials, Oblinger (2003), reports that they

- Gravitate toward group activity
- Identify with their parents' values and feel close to their parents
- Spend more time doing homework and less time watching television
- Believe "it is cool to be smart"
- Are fascinated by new technologies
- Are racially and ethnically diverse
- Often (one in five) have at least one immigrant parent (p. 38)

Oblinger further observes, “Along with differences in attitudes, Millennials exhibit distinct learning styles. For example, their learning preferences tend toward teamwork, experiential activities, structure, and use of technologies. Their strengths include multitasking, goal orientation, positive attitudes, and a collaborative style.” (p. 38)

According to Dunn and Dunn (1993), *learning styles* describe the way learners interact with new information. We use our learning styles to focus on, process, internalize, and retain academic information. As seen in Figure 1.2, Dunn and Dunn (1993) characterize learners as visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic. Because we do not all learn in the same way, the same instructional environment, methods, and resources will be effective for some learners and ineffective for others (Burke & Dunn, 2003).

Learning styles are evident in many modes, ranging from biochronological preferences to eating preferences to the different forms of representation we use to express what we know. For example, biochronological preferences include our preferred times for waking, learning, and studying. Interestingly, many students have preferences in this area that do not correspond to the hours during which we teach school. Eating preferences include how often we eat and the portions we choose to eat. For example, some people may choose to eat just three meals a day, while others may choose to eat smaller portions five or six times a day.

Learning style preferences that relate to how we express what we know are of particular interest to us as teachers. We may often ask our students to provide either an oral or written response, because those are the response modes that teachers asked us to use. Oral and written responses are good choices, but we also need to offer students alternative modes of
response—including sketching, dramatizing, and singing. In addition, we need to ensure that we integrate approaches such as project-based learning in our teaching.

Offering alternative modes of response accommodates students’ strength modes of expression. Although offering multiple modes of response is motivational for all students, it is particularly beneficial for more global learners, who are often struggling readers. (For more information about how students can use alternative ways to represent ideas, see Chapter 13.)

Finally, Jason Frand (2000) perceives Millennials as having an information-age mindset. According to Frand, this mindset is characterized by the following beliefs:

- **Computers aren’t technology.** Computers are just a part of life. Millennials believe this because they have never known life without computers.
- **The Internet is better than television.** Television viewing is declining as time spent online is increasing. One reason for this trend may be the ample opportunities for socializing that the Internet provides.
- **Reality is no longer real.** What seems to be real may not be. Digital images can be altered and email content may or may not be accurate.
- **Doing is more important than knowing.** Being able to use knowledge is valued more than accumulating facts.
- **Learning more closely resembles Nintendo than logic.** Losing is the fastest way to master the game, and losing represents learning.
Multitasking is a way of life. Students are comfortable doing more than one thing at once. For example, they may listen to music, do homework, and send instant messages simultaneously.

Typing is preferred to handwriting. Students believe their handwriting is not the best, but they can clearly communicate by using a keyboard.

Staying connected is essential. Students use multiple devices to maintain contact with family and friends throughout the day.

There is zero tolerance for delays. Students expect that service will always be available and that responses will be immediate.

The lines between consumer and creator are blurring. Students cut and paste information, blurring the lines among creator, owner, and consumer.

When we review the various characteristics of Millennials, those that relate to learning are of particular importance to us as teachers. We need to infuse those elements into our teaching. We can begin by ensuring that we (1) view technology not as an add-on to our coursework, but rather as a natural component of everyday teaching and learning; (2) make certain that cooperative and collaborative work permeates our courses; (3) accommodate students’ needs to process information in different ways; and (4) adapt our teaching techniques to honor the diverse nature of Millennials.

What Will We Teach?

We will teach the standards-based content necessary for our courses and enrich it by integrating our knowledge of multiple literacies. We will begin by incorporating what we learn about the reading process. We will focus on students’ background knowledge and teach strategies they can use to think through multiple types of text. Our work will be informed by national and state standards, as well as policy documents such as Reading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

We will also teach our students other literacies, including critical literacy and new literacies such as information literacy, media literacy, and multicultural literacy. We will integrate all these literacies in our teaching and help our students learn to think and understand in new and exciting ways.

How Will Our Teaching Support the Common Core State Standards?

Our teaching will support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), just as it has supported state standards in the past. When teaching our students, we will engage them in CCSS-based rich instructional tasks. The Common Core will complement our curriculums and appear in all of the lessons we design. (For more information about how we will integrate the CCSS in our teaching, please see Chapter 3, which is totally dedicated to the Standards; Appendix B, which features multiple graphic organizers created explicitly for CCSS-based instruction; and the Making Connections to the Common Core sections throughout this text.)

Making Connections

TO THE COMMON CORE

Think about what you know about the Common Core State Standards. Focus on how you think the Standards will affect your teaching. Do you think the impact will be similar to state standards of the past, or will it be different?

Share your thoughts with others in small-group discussion.
How Will Constructivism Support Our Teaching?

Teaching and learning are social constructivist processes. Constructivism is a theory about knowledge and learning. From a constructivist perspective, learning is understood as "a self-regulated process of resolving inner cognitive conflicts that often become apparent through concrete experience, collaborative discourse, and reflection" (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. vii). Constructivists believe that learners make sense of their world by connecting what they are learning to what they know and have experienced. They construct meaning through these connections when educators pose relevant problems, structure learning around primary concepts, seek and value students' ideas, and assess student learning in context (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

According to Short and Burke (1996), constructivism frees students of fact-driven curricula and encourages them to focus on larger ideas. It also allows students to reach unique conclusions and reformulate ideas, and it encourages them to see the world as a complex place with multiple perspectives. Finally, constructivism emphasizes that students are responsible for their own learning and should attempt to connect the information they learn to the world around them through inquiry.

Cambourne (2002, p. 26) suggests that constructivism has the following core theoretical assumptions:

- **What is learned cannot be separated from the context in which it is learned.** We cannot talk about what is learned separately from how it is learned because experiences do not lead to the same understanding. Our understanding is a function of the content, context, goals, and activity of the learner (Savery & Duffy, 1995).

- **The purposes or goals that the learner brings to the learning situation are central to what is learned.** The goal stimulates learning and determines what the learner attends to, what background knowledge he uses to construct meaning, and what understanding is constructed (Savery & Duffy, 1995).

- **Knowledge and meaning are socially constructed through the processes of negotiation, evaluation, and transformation.** Although the real world exists, there is no one correct set of meanings about it. Social interaction provides a medium for expanding our understanding.

Constructivists believe that students construct knowledge by linking what is new to what they already know. In reading, this concept is reflected in schema-based learning development, which purports that learning takes place when new information is integrated with what is already known. The more experience learners have with a particular topic, the easier it is for them to make connections between what they know and what they are learning (Anderson, 1994).

When we learn things or have experiences, we may store the information as background knowledge in our brains. We don't store everything we have ever experienced or learned, but rather what we deem to be important. For example, if we were asked what we ate for lunch a week ago, most of us wouldn't be able to respond correctly because what we ate for a meal seven days ago wasn't important enough for us to remember. But if we were asked what our favorite food was or who our best teacher was, we would be able to respond because that information was important enough to store in our brains. When we engage in reading as a social constructivist process, we construct meaning by making connections between what we are learning and what we have stored in our brains as background knowledge.

Discussion—a process that has cognitive, social, and affective dimensions—is an essential component of constructivism. It affords us opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking, interact with others, and take ownership of our learning (Almasi, 1996). Draper (2002) notes that it is through discussion that the teacher "comes to understand what the learner is prepared to learn (wants to learn) and how to orchestrate experience and more conversations so that the learner is able to construct meaning, understanding, and knowledge" (p. 522).

Cambourne (2002) suggests that we use the following principles when creating constructivist classrooms:
1. Create a classroom culture that supports and encourages deep engagement with multiple demonstrations of effective reading behavior.

2. Employ teaching activities and strategies that are a judicious mix of the four dimensions of teaching and learning:
   - Explicit—deliberately demonstrating the knowledge and skills students need to be effective readers
   - Systematically planned—instruction based on proactive, rational planning; a blueprint of future teaching
   - Mindful—openness to new information and different points of view
   - Contextualized—learning that makes sense to the learner.

3. Employ structures and processes that create continuous opportunities for the development of intellectual unrest.

4. Develop each learner’s metatextual (text function) awareness of the processes and understandings implicit in effective reading behavior.

5. Design and use tasks that will coerce authentic use of the processes and understandings implicit in effective reading behavior. (p. 30)

In social constructivist classrooms, we and our students take active roles in the educational process. Rather than require rote memorization and “the right answer,” constructivism supports a more student-centered approach that is rich in conversation. In constructivist content area classrooms, students are engaged learners. They have numerous opportunities to use higher-order thinking, and they play an active role in the construction of meaning.

**MAKING CONNECTIONS**

**Thinking about Constructivist versus Traditional Classrooms**

- Consider the characteristics of the constructivist classroom: student centered, active, engaged participants, social in nature.
- Think about your teaching and explain how a constructivist classroom would function in your content area.
- Share your thoughts in small-group discussions.

**What Roles Will Motivation and Engagement Play in Our Teaching?**

Motivation and engagement are key factors in teaching and learning. We know from our own experience that if we are studying a topic of interest to us, we learn more readily. The same is true for our students. Motivation makes it easier to make connections between what we are learning and what we already know. This supports our constructivist view of learning.

Motivation is multifaceted. It is described in terms of competence and efficacy beliefs, goals for reading, and social purposes of reading (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Gambrell, 2011). Motivated learners believe they can be successful and are willing to try to read more challenging reading material. They also possess intrinsic reasons for reading, such as gaining new knowledge about a topic or enjoying the reading experience. Motivated readers enjoy the social aspects of sharing new meanings gained from their reading with others.

Gambrell (1996a) suggests that “classroom cultures that foster motivation are characterized by (1) a teacher who is a good reading model, (2) a book-rich classroom environment,
(3) opportunities for choice, (4) familiarity with books, and (5) literacy-related incentives that reflect the value of reading” (p. 20). Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) note that highly motivated readers read for a wide variety of reasons, including curiosity, involvement, social interchange, and emotional satisfaction (p. 518). Patrick and Yoon (2004) note that motivation also plays an important role in inquiry. They report that "the type of motivational beliefs that students hold, particularly beliefs about their competence and their reasons for engaging in tasks, appears vital” (p. 327).

The engagement perspective on reading integrates cognitive, motivational, and social aspects of learning (Baker, Afflerbach, & Reinking, 1996; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999). Engaged learners achieve because they want to understand, they possess intrinsic motivations for interacting with text, they use cognitive skills to understand, and they share knowledge by talking with teachers and peers (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). Cambourne (1995) suggests that engaged learners have a purpose, seek to understand, believe in their own capability, and take responsibility for learning.

Engaged readers construct understandings based on connections between prior knowledge and new information. As teachers we can nurture students' ability to make connections by encouraging students to read for authentic purposes and to respond in meaningful ways, always focusing on comprehension, personal connections, and reader response. Engaged readers coordinate strategies and knowledge (cognition) within a community of learners (social) to fulfill their personal goals (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox, 1999). Baker and Wigfield (1999) note that “engaged readers are motivated to read for different purposes, utilize knowledge gained from previous experience to generate new understandings, and participate in meaningful social interactions around reading” (p. 453).

Finally, Gambrell (2011) suggests rules of engagement for motivating students to read. She notes that students are more motivated to read when

- The tasks and activities are relevant
- They have access to a variety of reading materials
- They engage in sustained reading
- They make choices about what they read and how they engage in literacy tasks
- They interact with others about their reading
- They receive positive feedback from teachers

**What Texts Will We Use?**

One of the biggest differences between teaching in the 21st century and the way in which we were taught is the current focus on multiple types of text. We may recall when the textbook was the only information source used to teach in the content areas. It is still part of our repertoire, but now we use multiple resources.

In today's classrooms, the most familiar content area textbook is the discipline-specific text purchased as part of a publisher's series. Many of these texts are comprehensive and innovative, and they often are complemented by ancillary materials such as kits, videos, and related websites. But the types of text we need to be able to “read” do not end there. "Text” has a variety of other meanings. It may refer to trade books, informational articles, song lyrics, movies, newspapers, television shows, poetry, conversations, everyday life situations, and more. The term is so far reaching because multiple literacies, such as information literacy, critical literacy, and media literacy, permeate every aspect of our lives.

The "reading" of texts also takes on new meaning when situated within multiple literacies. We are accustomed to reading print, but some literacies, such as critical literacy, require us to read beyond the printed word to examine the author’s intent and the text’s purpose. (For a more detailed discussion of multiple literacies, see Chapter 2.)
In the United States, we will also consider the Common Core Text Exemplars found in Appendix B of the CCSS (http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf). These grade-level or grade-range lists of titles are suggested or example texts for teaching at various grade levels. The lists include narrative and informational texts, but they are only suggested titles. They are not required. Nor should they be the only texts with which students engage at any given grade level.

Throughout the world, in part because of the widespread availability of the Internet and other media, access to "text" is readily available. From the page to the screen, we are bombarded with increasing amounts and types of texts that require us as readers to digest, synthesize, and respond, often with a sense of urgency and immediacy. Literacy demands are incessant as we learn to read these new texts and formats (Vogt & McLaughlin, 2004).

What Will We Learn?

We will learn many ideas and techniques that will enrich our teaching and, consequently, our students' learning. We will see the "big picture" of multiple literacies in the content areas and come to understand how our teaching is part of it. We will learn a wide variety of strategies to help our students understand what they read and multiple ways to assess what they learn. We will learn how to accommodate struggling readers and how to support English language learners. We will integrate all that we learn into our knowledge base, so we can become the most effective teachers possible.

How Will We Begin?

We will begin with step 1: taking a deep breath and visualizing ourselves teaching. Then we will fully participate in this course and use this textbook as our teaching resource. We will make connections between what we are learning and our personal experiences. We will learn to question in meaningful ways and teach our students how to be inquirers—how to set the course for their own learning. Because we will integrate our content area expertise and our understanding of multiple literacies, we will be able to teach better than we ever thought possible. We will view literacies as thinking processes and use them to unlock the content we are teaching. We will learn, practice, and apply. Then we will teach.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Our journey formally begins in the next chapter, when we examine the topic of multiple literacies. In Chapter 2, we will learn about adolescent literacy and content literacy. Then we will expand our thinking as we explore critical literacy, information literacy, media literacy, and multicultural literacy.
Chapter Summary

The nature of teaching was examined in this chapter, including:

- The qualities of excellent teachers in the 21st century
- Using constructivism to support teaching
- Incorporating motivation and engagement into teaching
- Integrating meaningful texts into teaching

Teaching Connections

**APPLYING WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED**

**E-Link**

To learn more about adolescent literacy, visit the International Reading Association website at [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org) and read the position statement on adolescent literacy. Entitled “Adolescent Literacy: A Position Statement for the Commission on Adolescent Literacy of the International Reading Association,” this document includes seven principles for supporting adolescent literacy growth.

After reading the position statement, reflect on the seven principles and consider how they relate to students in your content area. Do you agree or disagree with the principles? Which do you consider to be especially powerful? Are there other principles you would choose to add to the list? Document your thinking in a portfolio reflection.

**Accountable Talk**

As content area teachers of the 21st century, our work is very different from how our disciplines were taught in the past. Although we still value texts, we have moved beyond the “read the chapter/answer the questions mode” in which content area subjects have long been taught (and sadly still are taught in some classrooms) to teaching from a constructivist perspective. Imagine teaching your first classes. What challenges do you think you will face in teaching from this perspective? What tensions, if any, do you think you and your fellow teachers may experience? How might we address them? Discuss your responses in small-group conversations and help share your group’s thoughts in whole-class discussion.

**Portfolio/Performance Opportunity**

Knowing the kinds of educational experiences our students have had in the past will help us teach them more effectively. We can learn about their past experiences in a variety of ways, including asking them to write their own Literacy Histories. A Literacy History describes a person’s reading and writing experiences from earliest memory to present day. To fully understand how the past influences the future, please write your Literacy History (see the prompts in the following Literacy History figure) and include it as an entry in your portfolio.
Literacy History Prompts

These prompts have been developed to guide you in creating your Literacy History. This is not a definitive list of questions to which you should respond, but rather a sequence of ideas to stimulate your thinking about your literacy development, starting with your earliest literacy memories. Although you may choose to include many of the ideas expressed in the prompts, do not allow the prompts to restrict your thinking. Use this creative freedom as you record your experiences.

Early Memories

1. What are your earliest recollections of reading and writing?
2. Were you read to as a child?
3. Before you were able to read, did you pretend to read books? Can you remember the first time you read a book?
4. As a child, did you read and/or write with your siblings or friends?
5. Can you recall your early writing attempts (e.g., scribbling, labeling drawings)?
6. Was a newspaper delivered to your home? Do you recall seeing others read the newspaper? Did you read the newspaper?
7. Did you subscribe to children's magazines? Did your parents or siblings have magazine subscriptions?
8. Did your parents belong to a book club? Did they maintain a personal library? Did they read for pleasure?
9. Can you recall seeing family members making lists and receiving/sending mail?
10. Did you receive/send mail (e.g., birthday cards, thank-you notes, letters) when you were a child?
11. Can you remember any other indications that reading and writing were valued in the environment in which you grew up?

School Memories

12. What can you recall about your first memories of reading/writing instruction? Materials used? Methods of teaching? Content?
13. What can you recall about reading for pleasure in elementary school?
14. What can you recall about writing for pleasure in elementary school?
15. What can you recall about the first book you chose to read in elementary school?
16. What can you recall about your first writing assignment in elementary school?
17. Did you write a report in elementary school? What do you remember about this experience?
18. Do you remember the purposes for your reading and writing in elementary school? Do you recall any particular type of instruction you received? Can you describe any instructional materials that were used?
19. When you were in school, what would you have described as the three most important things you learned in content area classes?
20. What do you remember about how you were taught in content area subjects?
21. Did you have a library card when you were in elementary school? Did you use it then? In later school years?
22. Did you consider yourself to be a reader when you were in middle school?
23. Were you required to read certain books when you were in high school? How did you feel about that?

(continued)
Teaching Connections: Applying What We Have Learned, continued

**Reading for Pleasure and Social Purposes**

24. Can you recall the first book you “couldn’t put down”?
25. Have you ever read a book that has made a difference in your life?
26. Have you ever read a book that you knew had been challenged or censored? How did you feel about reading it?
27. Can you recall pleasurably sharing books with friends?
28. Did you read a certain type of book (e.g., mysteries, biographies) at a particular age? Why do you think you made such choices?
29. When did you first visit a bookstore? What was it like?
31. Have you ever seen a book you’ve read turned into a film?
32. Have there been times in your life when you have viewed reading as a pleasurable activity?
33. What contributions have your reading and writing abilities made to your life?
34. Are you a reader now?
35. Are you a writer now?
36. Do you feel comfortable modeling reading and writing for your students?
37. What are you currently reading? Writing?

**Technology**

38. How would you describe your first experience using a computer?
39. How do you use the Internet in your academic work?
40. How do you use a computer in your everyday life?
41. Do you communicate through email?
42. Which aspects of technology are you comfortable using in your teaching?

**Critical Awareness**

43. Have you ever questioned the veracity of an information source? Provide an example.
44. Have you ever questioned an author’s intent or a text’s purpose? Provide an example.
45. When you are reading and writing, do you consider multiple perspectives? Provide an example.
Whatever our discipline—mathematics, science, social science, modern language, or English—literacies underpin everything we teach. In the past, being literate required only that we be able to read and write. In today’s world, however, we need to be fluent in multiple literacies that require us not only to be able to read and write, but also to understand a variety of disciplines, navigate myriad information sources, examine authors’ intentions, and comprehend beyond the printed page.

Our ever-changing world has caused us to rethink literacy and the role it plays in our lives. We are living in an information age, one in which world news is readily available and access to friends on the other side of the world takes no longer than contacting the neighbor next door. We can shop, get the latest news, take university courses, or view the latest offerings in real estate in the privacy of our homes. The world is at our fingertips, and our resulting needs demand that we move beyond traditional views of literacy and embrace new perspectives. As Curwood and Cowell (2011) note, “Literacy practices are best understood by examining the environment in which they occur. In a world . . . in which digital tools are pervasive, and online spaces offer infinite possibilities, it is critical that educators understand how literacy practices operate in such contexts” (p. 110).
In this chapter, we learn about multiple literacies and how we can integrate them into our teaching. We begin by questioning the nature of literacies. Next, we explore content literacies, which relate to the specific disciplines we teach. After that, we discuss adolescent literacy, which addresses the age category into which our students fall. Then we turn our focus to critical literacy. Finally, we learn about new literacies, such as information literacy, media literacy, and multicultural literacy. In each of these sections, we gain knowledge of a particular type of literacy and discover how we can integrate it into teaching.

What Do the Terms Literacy, Multiple Literacies, and New Literacies Mean?

In the past, literacy was typically defined as the ability to read and write. It was viewed as functional literacy and encompassed those literacy skills that were required for navigating satisfactorily in society. It referred to the ability to read words well enough to complete forms (such as job applications), follow directions (such as how to plug in a toaster or other appliance), or understand simple communications (such as a note from a child’s teacher). Adults with a functional level of literacy were considered capable of being successful workers in their communities.

In recent years, the term literacy has expanded in meaning. The word itself has changed to literacies, reflecting the many different literacies that have emerged over time. These multiple literacies are diverse, multidimensional, and learned in different ways. Of course, we still support adolescent literacy, but the framework for teaching literacy to adolescents has now changed as each discipline has become identified with its own individual literacy: Mathematics literacy, science literacy, and history literacy are just a few examples. There are also technology-related literacies such as information literacy and media literacy. Critical literacy, which has been in existence for decades, is also now experiencing a wider range of acceptance. This widespread use has led to the inclusion of critical literacy in the list of literacies for the 21st century—the skills needed to flourish in today’s society and in the future (Abilock, 2013). There is also multicultural literacy, which facilitates our understanding of our own cultures, as well as others.

New literacies are characterized by change and emerge from developments in technology (Reinking, 1998). We need to learn the new literacies to help our students learn how to use the emerging technologies. The new literacies “include the skills, strategies, and insights necessary to successfully exploit the rapidly changing information and communication technologies that continuously emerge in our world” (Leu, 2002b, p. 313). Lonsdale and McCurry (2004) concur, observing that new literacies include the ability to “read” texts, master evolving technologies, manage information, and engage critically with texts. They further note that the boundaries of these literacies are not always clearly defined. For example, the term information literacy is often used interchangeably with cyber, digital, electronic, computer, technological, and library literacy. Critical literacy is thought to underpin all other literacies. Discipline-specific literacies, such as science, history, and mathematics literacy, are also viewed as new literacies.

Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, and Cammack (2004) observe:

New literacies include the skills, strategies, and dispositions that allow us to use the Internet and other Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) effectively to identify important questions, locate information, critically evaluate the usefulness of that information, synthesize information to answer those questions, and then communicate the answers to others. We encounter new literacies nearly every time we try to read, write, and communicate with the Internet and other ICTs. In fact, when reviewing the following list, we can easily see how students completing a long-term project would need to engage in new literacies.

- Using a search engine to effectively locate information
- Evaluating the accuracy and utility of information located on a webpage relative to one’s purpose
CHAPTER 2 WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ADOLESCENT LITERACY AND CONTENT LITERACIES?

- Using a word processor effectively, including using functions such as checking spelling accuracy, inserting graphics, and formatting text
- Participating effectively in bulletin board or listserv discussions to get needed information
- Knowing how to use email to communicate effectively
- Inferring correctly the information that may be found at a hyperlink on a webpage.

The emergence of new literacies can be linked to social, economic, and political change. Examples of these changes include learning being viewed as a lifelong process; individuals locating, managing, and evaluating a proliferation of information; teaching becoming more learner centered and inquiry based; a globalized economy demanding greater economic competition; intellectual capital replacing physical capital; and workers needing to be geographically mobile, adaptable, and multi-skilled (Lonsdale & McCurry, 2004). Leu (2002b) notes that new literacies build on existing literacies and believes we can characterize these skills and strategies in the following ways:

- Change is a defining element.
- New kinds of strategic knowledge are required.
- Reading from a critical perspective is involved.
- They are socially constructed.
- Interest and motivation underpin them.
- Teachers thoughtfully guide learning within information environments.
- Governments around the world are investing in the new literacies monetarily and academically.

Lewis (2007) further notes that context is central to the practices new literacies afford. Because technology is changing so quickly and new literacies are constantly emerging, critics of the new literacies have expressed concerns about the need for greater teacher preparation, potentially higher costs, and inappropriate use of technology in the classroom (Leu, 2002b). The new literacies are often described as including information literacy, media literacy, and multicultural literacy.

In the sections that follow, we examine content literacies, adolescent literacy, critical literacy, information literacy, media literacy, and multicultural literacy. We share current understandings about each topic and discuss how we can integrate these types of literacy into our teaching.

What Do We Know about Adolescent Literacy and Content Literacies?

According to Scribner and Cole (1981), adolescent literacy is

a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use. The nature of these practices, including, of course, their technological aspects, will determine the kinds of skills associated with literacy. (p. 236)

Moje (1996) supports this view and suggests that literacy involves the practices in which the processes of reading, writing, speaking, and listening are embedded. She views these processes “as tools for engaging in and making sense of social practice” (p. 175).

In other words, we and our students need to be able to read, write, speak, and listen to make sense of the world in which we live. One might assume that we would “be literate” by now,
but over time literacy has evolved into an ongoing process. Being literate has become obsolete. Becoming literate is now the more relevant term (Leu & Kinzer, 2000).

Discipline literacies is a term that refers to how we use literacy in specific content areas. Examples include mathematics literacy, science literacy, and social science literacy. Applications related to each of these literacies can be found in subsequent chapters of this book. When we teach from a traditional content area reading approach, we teach literacy skills and strategies that are broadly applicable to all disciplines. In contrast, when we teach from a disciplinary approach, we teach literacy practices particular to the discipline being studied (Draper, Broomhead, Jensen, Nokes, & Siebert, 2010; Moje, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). For example, reading in science requires disciplinary literacies that differ from those needed to read poetry or historical accounts. It requires that students read, write, and discuss the ways scientists do—by generating hypotheses and gathering data to respond to those ideas (Alvermann, Gillis, & Phelps, 2012).

Content area courses often require textbooks that many adolescents have difficulty reading. Some of these reading difficulties can be traced back to problems with decoding, which students should have learned when they were much younger. Other students’ reading difficulties might be related to poorly developed vocabularies and a lack of background knowledge (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999). Schools continue to use content area textbooks, even though the average high school student is reading below the level of many of the texts (Allington, 2002). Biancarosa and Snow, the authors of Reading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy (2006), conclude that students “lack the strategies to help them comprehend what they read” (p. 8).

To address this issue, Biancarosa and Snow (2006) recommend the explicit teaching of reading comprehension and intensive writing across the curriculum, as well as instruction in how to learn from texts. They also advocate for greater student motivation and more opportunities for small-group instruction—factors that should work well for our Millennial students. Santa (2006) agrees with these suggestions and adds that the most influential factor in student achievement is the teacher. The International Reading Association’s Commission on Adolescent Literacy (2001) has suggested that home–school literacy connections should also be developed.

So, although many people may believe that reading and writing are becoming less prevalent in an age of multiple literacies, just the opposite seems to be true. As Leu (2000) has reported, it is likely that reading and writing ability will become even more important in the future than they are today. This is due to the increasing need for acquiring and communicating information rapidly in a world of global competition and information economies. In this context, success will often be defined by one’s ability to quickly locate useful information to solve important problems and then communicate the solution to others. Proficient readers can acquire many types of information more rapidly by reading than they can by listening to speech or viewing a video. In an age when speed of information access is central to success, reading will be even more critical to our children’s futures. (p. 760)

Using What We Know about Adolescent Literacy and Content Literacies in Teaching

In Reading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy, Biancarosa and Snow (2006) encourage us to use what we know to teach adolescent literacy and content literacies. They remind us there are more than 8 million students in grades 4–12 who are struggling readers—students who cannot comprehend. These authors suggest that meeting the diverse literacy needs of such students will require a comprehensive approach. Although they note that the “optimal mix” of the elements will vary, they suggest that middle and high school literacy programs should focus on the following instructional improvements:

1. **Explicit teaching of comprehension strategies and processes.** We know that comprehension strategies can be taught. Within our districts, we need to work to ensure that
such instruction begins in the primary grades, so students can develop a repertoire of strategies they can use as needed while they are reading. It is also critical that we and teachers throughout the grades and across content areas focus on students’ strategy use. (See Chapters 4–7 for additional information about comprehension processes such as activating background knowledge and teaching reading comprehension strategies.)

2. **Embedding effective instructional principles in content.** This improvement proposes that we, as content area teachers, infuse discipline-related reading and writing into our teaching and provide opportunities for application. Examples of this can be found in subsequent chapters in this text. (For further information about reading and writing, see Chapters 4–8 and 10–13.)

3. **Motivating students.** As teachers, we know that student motivation is essential for learning in all subjects. We know many ways to motivate our students, including helping them make connections between their personal experiences and content, providing opportunities for self-selection of research/project topics, and encouraging students to represent their thinking in a variety of ways. (For more information about alternative ways to represent thinking, see Chapter 13.)

4. **Using text-based, collaborative learning.** This supports the Millennials’ tendency to gravitate toward working in groups. This type of learning can promote student interaction related to the topic being studied. It can also advance other benefits of collaborative learning, such as shared ideas, respect for the thoughts of others, negotiated meaning, positive interdependence, individual accountability, interpersonal communication skills, and risk taking, as well as working with diverse types and levels of text (see instructional improvement 6).

5. **Strategic, intensive tutoring.** As noted earlier, there are millions of struggling readers, but few programs to help them read better during adolescence. This improvement would provide such tutoring for adolescents in reading, writing, and content knowledge.

6. **Using diverse types and levels of text.** Using multiple types and levels of text motivates students and provides access that they may not experience when reading the course textbook. Using theme-related trade books provides opportunities for students to learn from different perspectives. (See Chapter 8 for more information about types of texts.)

7. **Intensive writing.** Reading and writing are inextricably linked, and we know that the more students engage in them, the better they perform. Courses infused with intensive writing will benefit students. (For more information about integrating writing in the content areas, see Chapter 10. For additional examples of integrating writing, see Chapters 12–14.)

8. **Using technology as a tool for, and a topic of, literacy instruction.** Technology use is a great motivator for students. Most learners have an intrinsic interest in it. This improvement suggests that we use technology to motivate and to inform. (For more information about integrating technology in the content areas, see Chapter 11.)

9. **Assessing students through informal measures.** Informal measures are those that we use to assess our students every day. They include observation, students’ strategy applications, discussion, and informal written responses. (For more information about informal assessments, see Chapter 14.)

In addition to the instructional improvements, *Reading Next* suggests that the educational infrastructure should be improved by providing extended time for literacy, long-term professional development, summative (more formal) assessment of students and programs, interdisciplinary teacher teams, and leadership in teaching reading and writing to all students. (For more information about professional development, see Chapter 15.)

According to *Reading Next*, the suggested improvements should not be viewed in isolation, but rather as elements of a group that have dynamic and powerful interrelations. Although professional development and formative and summative assessment are described as essential to effect change, Biancarosa and Snow (2006) suggest that the elements should be used in optimal mixes, dependent on contexts.

Regardless of technological developments that occur in the future, adolescent literacy and content literacies will continue to be important issues for our students. As their teachers, we
need to ensure that they have the processes, strategies, knowledge, and opportunities they need to be successful. (For more detailed information about such strategies and the reading process, see Chapters 4–7.)

**What Do We Know about Critical Literacy?**

Current thinking about literacy suggests that we should help our students to comprehend at deeper levels—levels that require them to understand beyond the information on the printed page and critically analyze the author's message (Pearson, 2001). Reading from a critical literacy perspective encourages our students and us to examine the connections between language, power, and knowledge; to transform relationships; and to reason and act responsibly. It involves thinking beyond the text to understand issues such as why the author wrote about a particular topic, wrote from a particular perspective, and chose to include some ideas about the topic and exclude others.

For example, when we were in elementary school, content area text authors may have shared some information about a topic, but not all. Many of us may remember learning that Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492 and that he had three ships: the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*. We probably also learned that Italy—Columbus's homeland—would not provide funding for his explorations. The money came instead from Queen Isabella of Spain.

What we have just read about Columbus is what many believe to be the essential history of his explorations, but it is not the whole story. A textbook company decided that what we should learn about Columbus was what I have just recounted. The same company also decided what we should not learn about Columbus—that he is viewed as the person responsible for destroying the Tainos people. From a critical perspective, we would question why the textbook from which we learned did not include the whole truth, as current history textbooks do. We would also question what right the author and the textbook company had to withhold the whole story, to discount the perspective of the Tainos people. We would then reflect and try to take action that would provide justice for the Tainos, perhaps by ensuring that their story is told or by working to help other indigenous peoples.

Critical literacy is grounded in Freire’s (1983) belief that reading is much more than decoding language or accepting text as true—it is preceded by and intertwined with knowledge of the world. Because language and reality are dynamically interwoven, the understanding attained by the critical reading of a text implies perceiving the relation between text and context.

Freire (1970) suggests that instead of passively accepting the information presented, readers should not only read and understand the word, but “read the world” and understand the text’s purpose in order to avoid being manipulated by it. “Reading the world” enables critically aware readers to comprehend beyond the literal level and think about the function and the production of texts. Reading the world means trying to understand what authors are trying to convey in their messages and how they are communicating those messages. It requires that readers not accept only superficial responses to the text, but rather reflect on the text’s purposes and the author’s style. This reasoning is often expressed through dialogue with others who are seeking to understand the hidden forces at work. This kind of reflection takes time and requires constant monitoring of the text.

Reading from this perspective requires both the ability and the deliberate inclination to think critically about—to analyze and evaluate—texts, meaningfully question their origin and purpose, and take action by representing alternative perspectives. Questioning plays an important role in this process. Examples of the types of questions that facilitate thinking from a critical perspective are featured in Figure 2.1. These questions require readers to think at evaluative levels, to question what message the author is trying to convey and how that message relates to the truth. (For more information about generating questions at multiple levels of thinking, see Chapter 8.)
It is important to note that critical theorists’ expanded notion of texts isn’t limited to words from a novel or a song or a newscast. Texts can also be conditions (sociocultural influences, state assessment–driven curricula, funding or lack of it) or relationships and situations in everyday life (analyzing an occurrence from another person’s perspective).

Critical literacy views readers as active participants in the reading process and invites them to move beyond passively accepting the text’s message to question, examine, or dispute the power relations that exist between readers and authors—to ponder what the author wants readers to believe, take action, and promote fairness between people. It focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, action, and transformation (Freire, 1970).

The Principles of Critical Literacy developed by McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004a) include a number of essential understandings and beliefs about the power relationship that exists between the reader and the author. Discussion of the four principles follows, and related examples are summarized next.

Critical literacy focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation, and action. Whenever readers commit to understanding a text—whether narrative or informational—they submit to the right of the author to select the topic and determine the treatment of the ideas.

Critical literacy focuses on the problem and its complexity. Situations that are fairly intricate are often viewed from an essentialist (very simplistic) perspective. In critical literacy, rather than accepting an essentialist view, we engage in problematizing—seeking to understand the problem and its complexity. In other words, we raise questions and seek alternative explanations as a way of more fully acknowledging and understanding the complexity of the situation.

Critical literacy strategies are dynamic and adapt to the contexts in which they are used.
There is no list of methods in critical literacy that work the same way in all contexts at all times. No technique that promotes critical literacy can be exported to another setting without adapting it to that context. As Freire (1998) has observed, “It is impossible to export pedagogical practices without reinventing them” (p. xi).

Comber (2001) has observed that when teachers and students are engaged in critical literacy, “They ask complicated questions about language and power, about people and lifestyle, about morality and ethics, about who is advantaged by the way things are and who is disadvantaged” (p. 271). To participate in such a classroom environment, readers must play not only the roles of code breakers, meaning makers, and text users, but also the role of text critics (Luke & Freebody, 1999). In other words, readers need to understand that they have the power to envision alternative ways of viewing the author’s topic, and they exert that power when they read from a critical stance.

Critical literacy disrupts the commonplace by examining it from multiple perspectives.

Examining the point of view from which a text is written and brainstorming other perspectives that may or may not be represented challenge students to expand their thinking and discover diverse beliefs, positions, and understandings (McLaughlin, 2001). These techniques help students to transition from accepting the text as it is presented to questioning the author’s intent and the information presented in the text.

The principles of critical literacy provide insight into what critical literacy is and how it functions. This dynamic process examines power relationships, acknowledges that all texts are biased, and encourages readers to explore alternative perspectives and take action. It expands our thinking, and it enlightens our perceptions as we read both the word and the world from a critical stance.

Reading from a critical stance requires both the ability and the deliberate inclination to think critically about—to analyze and evaluate—texts (books, media, lyrics, electronic text, life relationships), meaningfully question their origin and purpose, and take action by representing alternative perspectives. When students engage in critical literacy, they are able to “expand their thinking and discover diverse beliefs, positions, and understandings” (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004b, p. 55). The goal is for readers to become text critics in everyday life—to become active thinkers rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

It is important to realize that critical literacy is more complex than other literacies. We cannot just “become” critically literate. Instead, this process requires learning, understanding, and changing over time. It includes developing theoretical, research, and pedagogical repertoires, changing with time and circumstance, engaging in self-critical practices, and remaining open to possibilities (Comber, 2001).

**Making Connections**

**Thinking about Critical Literacy**

- Reflect on reading from a critical perspective. How could reading from a critical stance deepen your students’ understanding of your content area?
- Share your thoughts with others in small-group discussion.

**Integrating What We Know about Critical Literacy into Teaching**

Teachers, students, and texts play important roles in creating a context that fosters critical literacy—one in which reading from a critical stance is a natural occurrence that extends beyond the classroom to everyday life experiences (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004b). Our role in initiating and developing critical literacy is multifaceted. It begins with personal understanding and use of critical literacy and extends to teaching students about critical literacy, modeling reading from a critical stance in everyday teaching and learning experiences, and providing access to a variety of texts that represent critical literacy.
Once we become critically aware, teaching students to read from a critical stance should be a natural process. First, as in any other act of reading, the teacher should ensure that students have the background knowledge necessary to read from a critical stance. The teacher might then choose to scaffold learning by using a five-step instructional framework: explain, demonstrate, guide, practice, and reflect (McLaughlin & Allen, 2009). This scaffolding, or gradual release of responsibility to students, provides time and opportunity for them to become comfortable with reading from a critical stance. To begin, we can explain what it means to be critically aware and then demonstrate by using a read-aloud and a think-aloud. During this process, we provide a critical perspective that questions and challenges the text. We may use questions such as these: Whose viewpoint is expressed? Whose voices are missing, silenced, or discounted? What action might you take based on what you have learned? We might also introduce strategies such as juxtapositioning texts or incorporating alternative texts (example follows). After we explain and demonstrate, students—working in pairs or small groups—can offer responses as we guide their reading and as they practice reading from a critical stance. As a final step, we and the students reflect on what they know about being critically aware and how it helped them to understand the text. This often results in their making connections (text–self, text–text, text–world) and leads to discussions of how students can apply what they have learned to the reading of other texts.

Students who engage in critical literacy become open-minded, active, strategic readers who are capable of viewing text from a critical perspective. They understand that the information presented in texts, magazines, newspapers, song lyrics, and websites has been authored from a particular perspective for a particular purpose. They know that meaning is “grounded in the social, political, cultural and historic contexts of the reading event” (Serafini, 2003).

Although methods are something most critical scholars shy away from, there are a variety of starting points that we can use to help students develop a critical stance. The following ideas and resources provide some direction for initial engagement. As noted earlier, we need to take these ideas, adapt them to our particular contexts, and scaffold students’ learning.

**Juxtapositioning Texts.** Juxtapositioning is a technique that helps demonstrate multiple perspectives. It can occur in a variety of formats, using a number of informational sources. For example, in a high school history course in which World War II was being studied, juxtapositioning was used in theme-based focus groups. The students were reading excerpts from *The Greatest Generation*, a theme-related text that represented the Allies’ perspective, in a whole-class setting. They were also reading theme-based books that represented different perspectives of World War II—those of Holocaust victims, German soldiers, American and Japanese survivors of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, various political leaders of the time, and victims of the Japanese American internment—in small groups. After the books were read and discussed, the students regrouped, so that one student representing each book would be in each of the newly formed groups.

In this scenario, discussions focused on multiple perspectives. Students reported that they had not considered perspectives such as those of the Japanese American victims of internment, nor had they thought about the perspectives of women working on the home front or of people who had worked to help save the victims of the Holocaust. An interesting discussion of the media during the 1940s also emerged. It focused on the immediacy of information we experience now as compared to the radio news and handwritten letters used to communicate military developments during World War II. The discussion then moved on to a critical analysis of the media, focusing on issues such as who decides what information is included in and excluded from the news we see and read. After in-depth small-group discussion, pairs of students created posters on which they juxtaposed visual representations of the World War II perspectives they had read about. The posters were then shared and discussed in a whole-class setting. Students took action by inviting Holocaust survivors and U.S. soldiers who had participated in World War II to school to share their perspectives on World War II. Figure 2.2 contains a list of sample texts used for the theme-based focus groups on World War II.

Personal recollections of Pearl Harbor survivors, both American and Japanese, military and civilian, are presented in this book. Maps, pictures, and timelines to help readers follow the events of Pearl Harbor and World War II in general are included.


This autobiography recounts Alicia Appleman-Jurman’s triumph over the terrifying, unrelenting brutality of the Nazi regime. After managing to escape and witnessing her own mother’s murder, she helps others escape with her to Palestine.


Set in France during World War II, this book is based on recollections of the author’s father. A young American pilot’s plane is shot down in Nazi-occupied France, and the French Resistance works to get him safely out of enemy territory.


Personal narratives tell the stories of the many non-Jews persecuted by Hitler and the Nazis, both before and during World War II. Some of the groups discussed include Gypsies, homosexuals, blacks, physically challenged individuals, and political and religious activists.


This biography tells the story of a Japanese diplomat working in Lithuania, who chooses to ignore his orders and listen to his conscience. Despite the risks to himself and his family, Sugihara writes thousands of transit visas and saves the lives of countless Jews.


Patty, a young Jewish girl who is struggling to find herself, discovers Anton, a young German prisoner of war who has escaped. Patty takes incredible risks to conceal and protect Anton and learns a great deal about herself in the process.


A Holocaust survivor copes with the loss of her family by running an orphanage for 100 Jewish children who survived the Nazi occupation of Poland. The story recounts everyday victories like learning to laugh again as well as bigger issues such as leaving Poland for a safer home.


A ten-year-old Danish girl named Annemarie and her family risk their own safety to help Annemarie’s best friend and her Jewish family escape to Sweden, where they will be safe from the Nazis.


A young boy who is a member of the Hitler Youth movement early in the Nazi era tells his story. The first-person account provides some insight into the people who were part of the Axis forces.


Jaap Penraat, a young Dutchman, helps save more than 400 Jews during World War II by using his father’s printing press to forge identification papers for Jewish friends and neighbors. He then creates a bogus German construction company and smuggles his “construction workers” to phony job sites and safety.


Children of the Nazi concentration camp in Terezin, Czechoslovakia, created these haunting poems and drawings. Of the 15,000 children who went to Terezin, fewer than 100 survived.


This autobiography recounts the life of a young boy in a Nazi death camp. The book includes accounts of many tragic events, including the author witnessing the death of his own family.
**TEACHING IDEA**

**ALTERNATIVE TEXTS.** We create alternative texts to represent perspectives that are different from those that are present in the texts we read. The text can be narrative or informational and can consist of oral, written, visual, or imagined representations—including, but not limited to, drawings, oral descriptions, dramatizations, and songs. By creating an alternative text, the reader perceives the information in a different way and begins to understand the complexity of the issue examined. When using this technique, students can examine the message conveyed by a text, photo, or song and then write an alternative text, take or find an alternative photo, or create alternative lyrics. For example, after seeing a billboard of happy people having dinner in their expensive house, a student might choose to create an alternative text—which might also have a billboard design—about a sad person who is alone, homeless, and dependent on shelters for food and a bed. The student might then take action by encouraging peers to actively participate in the school’s food and clothing drive for the homeless or by organizing a group of friends to work for that effort.

Students have also created alternative texts in other curricular areas. For example, they have created alternative texts in science class after reading newspaper articles about the effects of medical waste pollution on the ocean or about developments in the use of cloning. In music class, students have examined family relationships by creating alternative lyrics to a variety of songs including “Cat’s in the Cradle.” In social studies, students created alternative texts for texts expressing views on a variety of political issues.

Teaching ideas such as juxtapositioning, theme-based focus groups, and creating alternative texts are adaptable across curriculum areas. They provide opportunities to situate critical literacy in a variety of contexts and encourage both our students and us to view critical literacy as a natural part of learning.

Critical literacy permeates every other kind of literacy. Information literacy, media literacy, multicultural literacy, and discipline-specific literacies provide examples of its broad influence.

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**What Do We Know about Information Literacy?**

Information literacy is understanding what information is needed, evaluating the best sources, and knowing how to obtain the information in the most effective way. The easiest way to think about information literacy may be to imagine a long-term, student performance-based research project. The students would utilize information literacy to use the Internet to develop important questions, locate information, synthesize the information to answer their questions, and communicate the information to others (Leu et al., 2004, p. 1572).

**Using What We Know about Information Literacy in Teaching**

Abilock (2013) suggests, that we can make connections among information literacy, students’ skills and strategies, student outcomes, and curriculum and teaching design. This integration supports our use of information literacy across the curriculum. For example, students using information literacy in science might engage in research projects about scientific developments such as global warming or the viability of life on Mars, while students in foreign language class might research the various dimensions of the culture they are studying.

**MAKING CONNECTIONS**

**Thinking about Information Literacy**

- Reflect on your content area and contemplate how your students might use information literacy.
- Share your thoughts with others in a small-group discussion.
What Do We Know about Media Literacy?

According to Considine (2013), media literacy is “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create information in a variety of media formats.” Much like critical literacy, it moves beyond what we would generally consider as comprehension to analyzing and evaluating information. Media literacy applies critical perspectives to print and electronic media (Summers, 2000).

Critical media literacy positions students to analyze relations among media, audiences, information, and power and to produce alternative media texts (Kellner & Share, 2007b). Gainer (2010) notes that helping students navigate multiple texts, think critically about messages embedded in them, and create their own texts is at the heart of critical media literacy.

Media literacy fosters what Brown (1998) describes as “discriminating responsiveness” and what Singer and Singer (1998) term “critical viewers.” In media literacy, viewers deconstruct media messages by analyzing the message, the product, and the influence (Scharrer, 2002–2003). We do this by raising questions similar to those we ask in critical literacy: Who chose the message that is being communicated? What does that person want us to believe? What perspectives may have been marginalized? What action might we take based on what we have viewed? Because media are pervasive in our lives and the lives of our students, questioning from a critical perspective is essential if we are to be able to interpret the messages we receive (Ivey, 2000).

Silverblatt (2000) suggests that we should use seven principles to guide the use of media literacy in our teaching:

**Principle 1:** Media literacy empowers individuals to make independent judgments about media consumption.

**Principle 2:** Media literacy focuses attention on the elements involved in the media communication process. Our online communication is both expressive and receptive, because we both impart and retrieve information.

**Principle 3:** Media literacy fosters an awareness of the impact of the media on the individual and society as a whole.

**Principle 4:** Media literacy develops strategies with which to analyze and discuss media messages.

**Principle 5:** Media literacy promotes awareness of interactive media content as a “text” that provides insights into contemporary culture and ourselves.

**Principle 6:** Media literacy cultivated enhanced enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of media content.

**Principle 7:** Media literacy challenges interactive media communicators to produce effective and responsible media messages.

Our goal is to teach our students to be active learners and not passively accept media messages. Teaching media literacy will encourage our students to actively question the format, content, and intent of media communication.

Integrating Media Literacy into Teaching

Media literacy not only suggests that students learn from the media, resist media manipulation, and empower themselves in terms of media, but also promotes the development of skills that will motivate and empower students in everyday life. Critical discussions, analyses, and respect for inquiry play important roles in this process. Summers (2000) suggests that when we teach our students about media literacy, we use the three R’s—review, reflect, and react. She describes these terms as follows:

- **Review:** examine, investigate, summarize, restate, describe, explain, analyze, deconstruct, and study
- **Reflect:** compare, contrast, personalize, apply, judge, debate, critique, defend, and evaluate
- **React:** support, subscribe to, reject, internalize, participate in, adopt, editorialize, and oppose
Our students can apply the three R’s process to a variety of media, including news, controversial advertisements, and political message films. For example, science students might analyze messages about rainforests or cloning, while mathematics students might question the source and relevance of statistics about a particular issue. Because the media permeate our students’ lives, it is increasingly important that the students know how to analyze messages from these sources.

**Making Connections**

**THINKING ABOUT THE COMMON CORE**

Consider the role critical media literacy might play in Common Core State Standard expectations that include students’ engagement with multimodal text.
Share your thoughts with others in small-group discussion.

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**What Do We Know about Multicultural Literacy?**

*Multicultural literacy* is the ability to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences in the customs, values, and beliefs of one’s own culture and the cultures of others (Northwest Central Regional Educational Laboratory & Metiri Group, 2003). Proponents of multicultural literacy:

- **Value diversity.** Students appreciate and accept similarities and differences in cultural beliefs, appearances, and lifestyles.

- **Exhibit an informed sensitivity.** Students can take the perspectives of other cultural groups and can be sensitive to issues of bias, racism, prejudice, and stereotyping.

- **Actively engage in and with other cultures.** Students communicate, interact, and work with individuals from other cultural groups, using technology where appropriate.

We live in a world in which communication with other cultures is instantaneous. To communicate cross-culturally in meaningful ways, we and our students not only need to understand and appreciate a variety of cultures, but also to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for positive interaction (Banks et al., 2001).

**Integrating What We Know about Multicultural Literacy into Teaching**

Communication seems to be the ultimate mode of engagement for multicultural literacy. We can communicate personally within our own communities or with cultures around the world through cyberspace. This includes classes using email, shared websites, or videoconferencing as formats for cultural exchange. For example, students in a foreign language class can learn about particular cultures by communicating with students who actually live in those cultures. Students can also participate in shared class projects, such as animal extinction research with students in Greenland and Africa, or engage in moderated e-discussions of world issues, such as the economy or scientific discoveries. As Gainer (2010) notes,

&Squo;Schools are places where students can learn to transform society. In classrooms that embrace a pedagogy of critical media literacy, space is made for students to analyze and critique dominant narratives. Furthermore, this education goes beyond critique, because students are provided tools to make their own media and make their voices heard. In the process of learning about texts as ideological and social constructions, students can take power to coconstruct their own identities through alternative representations—counter narratives that talk back to oppressive myths of dominant discourse. In classrooms that make such social spaces for students’ critical narratives, students learn firsthand about active civic engagement necessary for participatory democracy. (p. 372)
FINAL THOUGHTS

Teaching in an age of multiple literacies is a complex, dynamic experience filled with challenges and rewards. Characterized by global innovation, evolving understandings of our content area subjects, and ever-emerging technologies, the time in which we live demands that we become critically aware and transition from passively accepting information to critiquing it, from relying on the author's intent to exploring multiple perspectives. Our goal: to make sense of the world in a time that is characterized by change. In the next chapter we build upon what we have learned by examining the Common Core State Standards and how multiple literacies function within the Standards themselves, as well as related school curriculums. We explore the Standards, situate them within a constructivist framework, and examine discipline-specific examples.

Chapter Summary

The 21st century as an age of multiple literacies was discussed in this chapter. Special emphasis was placed on:

- Adolescent literacy and content literacies
- Critical literacy
- How multiple literacies can be demonstrated in classrooms

Teaching Connections

APPLYING WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

E-Link

To gain a deeper understanding of the state of adolescent literacy, read Reading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy. In that report from the Alliance for Excellent Education, Biancarosa and Snow (2006) assess the state of adolescent literacy and make recommendations concerning how to address current challenges in the field. To find the document, visit http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/ReadingNext.pdf

Focus on the background information about struggling adolescent readers and the 15 suggestions to improve instruction and infrastructure. Remember that Snow and Biancarosa (2006) suggest that the 15 elements should be used in what they describe as an “optimal mix.” Choose a school in which you have had a field experience or currently teach and develop what you perceive to be the optimal mix of elements that would benefit the adolescents in that school. Justify your thinking in a portfolio reflection.
Accountable Talk

Many of us grew up believing everything we read in a textbook. We never questioned who was writing the text, who was determining which topics would be included in it, or who was deciding what would be excluded from it. We never questioned if there was any perspective other than the one presented. As a result, we believed the information presented to us, which included that all inventors of importance were white men and excluded information about events such as the Japanese American internment during World War II. Today’s school students interact with many more information sources than we did at their age. They need to understand that critical literacy requires that we move beyond passively accepting information and question both the information and those who have created or compiled it. Consider critical literacy and explain how you would teach your students to think from a critical perspective. Choose a specific topic in your content area and offer an example of how you could use it to teach critical literacy. Discuss your ideas in small-group conversations and then share your group’s thoughts in whole-class discussion.

Portfolio/Performance Opportunity

Integrating multiple literacies is essential for quality teaching and learning. Consider information literacy, media literacy, and multicultural literacy. Explain how you would integrate each when teaching in your content area. Choose a specific topic and create a lesson plan that incorporates two of these literacies. Include the lesson plan in your portfolio.