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Using Shared Reading and Close Reading to Bridge Intervention and the Common Core

Karen C. Waters, Ed.D, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT

While classroom teachers are grappling with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and its implications for instruction in the core curriculum, designing effective intervention to meet the needs of diverse struggling readers poses another challenge, especially because Response to Intervention (RTI) as an instructional framework frequently emphasizes the teaching of discrete skills. Experts have concluded that intervention focusing primarily on foundational skills without instruction in comprehension is not only contrary to literacy research, but also antithetical to the shift to contextualized literacy instruction, resulting in fragmented instruction for those most in need. At the same time, inherent within both CCSS and RTI is the goal for students to read increasingly complex texts. While the CCSS presumes the internalization of the foundational skills to identify the central ideas and themes of a text, isolated skill instruction continues to dominate RTI.

Bridging the divide between RTI and the CCSS will require thoughtful and deliberate scaffolding to provide universal access for all students. Two approaches for advancing student reading achievement include the time-honored strategy of shared reading and not-quite-as-familiar-strategy of close reading, which provide the pedagogical anchors for this article. Though the parameters separating the two formats are not clear-cut, shared reading emphasizes accurate and fluent oral reading through repeated readings, while close reading focuses on deep comprehension of main ideas and central themes by returning to the text. Combined use of these strategies within the traditional intervention format just might provide the link from tiered instruction to the core curriculum and a transition from the development of fundamental skills to purposeful, critical reading.

Response to Intervention (RTI), a comprehensive framework for enhancing the reading achievement of all students (Lipson, Chomsky-Higgins, & Kanfer, 2011), has evolved as a national initiative characterized by research-based practices, extended instructional time, differentiated instruction, progress monitoring, dynamic assessment, and data driven-decision-making (Gunning, 2006, Weishar & Weishar, 2012; Wixson & Valencia, 2011). Unfortunately, the tailoring of a unique intervention plan is an infrequent occurrence. Allington (2013) and Scanlon (2013) claimed that intervention does not necessarily consider the research in teaching students to read. In fact, Scanlon (2013) asserted that while districts ascribe to the framework of RTI, mere participation in pull-out skills-based intervention does not guarantee accelerated reading achievement for the student.

As districts hasten to carry out the CCSS in their mission to deepen student comprehension of complex text and increase the quality and quantity of student writing, differentiating instruction for the lowest-performing students takes on an added dimension. The implications of the CCSS on existing curriculum and instruction, and the extent to which it impacts intervention is uncertain (McLaughlin, M. & Overturf, B., 2012). Wanting to teach students to “read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 10), teachers are speculative about using “stretch” texts that were previously considered to be too difficult for most students (Stahl, 2012). They ponder the question: How do I balance the developmental needs of my struggling students while

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meeting the challenge of the CCSS to infuse my lessons with complex text? However, with the Common Core’s “vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century,” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 3) there is renewed interest in the utilization of specific pedagogies that will develop skills in reading and writing to address the anchor standards.

Purpose
The purpose of this article is to examine the possibilities for customizing interventions to meet the needs of lower-achieving students by revisiting the instructional routines of shared reading to contextualize the teaching of foundational skills within appropriately-challenging text, and close reading as a meaning-making tool by which students deepen comprehension. First, the features of each strategy are described, and a theoretical rationale considers the integration of shared reading and close reading in designing effective intervention emanating from core instruction. An instructional framework linking both strategies includes a 5-day plan for working with a group of fourth grade struggling readers, inclusive of special needs students. Finally, a vision considers not only considers the creation of culturally relevant pedagogy and a merging of intervention with the CCSS, but also the implications of a rejuvenated assessment system to address the needs of all students.

A Closer Look at the Features of Shared Reading and Close Reading
The research-based shared reading experience (SRE) (Holdaway, 1979) and close reading (Fisher & Frey, 2012) are two instructional routines, rooted in constructivism, that hold promise for bridging the divide between intervention and core instruction. Originally intended as a format to increase fluency and accuracy in oral reading for emergent readers, the shared reading experience (Holdaway, 1979) has evolved and expanded to encompass a variety of lessons for the explicit teaching of comprehension, vocabulary, text features and text structures, which has been successful in meeting the developmental needs of older struggling readers (Stahl, 2012). The work of Fisher, Frey and Lapp (2008, 2012), and Stahl (2012) in shared and close reading provided the inspiration for a combined protocol for teaching these foundational and meaning-making skills. A review of the individual elements comprising both strategies reveals a blurring of the parameters between shared and close reading for navigating the demands of increasingly complex text. However, the component of teacher modeling (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2008), establishes shared reading as the precursor to the integration and assimilation of skills required for deep comprehension (Stahl, 2012).

Shared Reading
Explicit teaching of text structure, text features, vocabulary and comprehension (Stahl, 2012) are addressed through repeated readings. Foundational skills and word work activities are extracted from the text and then contextualized to ensure cohesion among skills. In shared reading, teachers use think-alouds to show their thought process, and provide fluent models of oral reading as students follow along with copies of the text. Students then pose questions, discuss central themes with a partner, and construct written responses to the text. Implemented initially as a read-aloud using a “stretch” text that may be too difficult, shared reading scaffolds instruction in a gradual release model that ultimately enables the learner to read the story with little teacher assistance (2012).

Close Reading
Whereas shared reading emphasizes the rereading of text to develop fluency, the instructional routine of close reading presumes the internalization of the foundational skills of decoding and academic vocabulary in order to focus on the deeper meaning of text. However, to assume that close reading enters where shared reading leaves off is perhaps an oversimplification of both strategies; suffice to say that the repeated readings associated with close reading emphasize critical analysis of what Fisher and Frey (2012) refer to as the “deep structures” (p. 179) of text. Internal text structures, the exactness of the author’s word choices, the implicit and the explicit messages, and how the reader connects ideas within a text and in combination with other texts to construct his own beliefs and knowledge are the features...
Table 1: Incorporating Shared Reading into 5-Day Plan adapted from Shared Reading Components, Fisher, Frey & Lapp (2008, p. 551).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area in Shared Reading</th>
<th>Application of CCSS</th>
<th>5-Day Plan for Shared Reading with <em>The Boy Who Drew Cats</em> (Hodges, 2002)</th>
<th>Strategies and Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>CCSS.CCRA.SL.1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (NGA &amp; CCSSO), 2010a, p. 24).&lt;br&gt; c. Make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others (NGA &amp; CCSSO), 2010a, p. 24).&lt;br&gt; d. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 24).&lt;br&gt; CCSS Objective RL.1.4 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences (NGA &amp; CCSSO), 2010a, p. 24).&lt;br&gt; CCSS.CCRA.RL.2. Determine central ideas of themes of a text and analyze their development ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).&lt;br&gt; CCSS.CCRA.RL.3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Day 1: Interactive read-aloud. (Whole Class) Focus on obtaining overview of story through interactive read-aloud, encouraging students to draw inferences and making predictions from story content.&lt;br&gt; Review elements of narrative story structure including main characters, setting, problem, solution, main events, solution, and theme in preparation for story map activity.&lt;br&gt; Differentiating instruction for Tiers 2 &amp; 3: Teacher listens to partnership discussions, checking for comprehension, and courage self-monitoring by reviewing story as necessary.</td>
<td>Drawing inferences&lt;br&gt; Determining Importance&lt;br&gt; Questioning&lt;br&gt; Summarizing and Synthesizing&lt;br&gt; Self-monitoring or fix-up strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>CCSS.CCRA.RF.4.3. Know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 17).&lt;br&gt; CCSS.CCRA.RL.4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Word Work for Tiers 2 and 3 Discussion of word parts, words, phrases, and sentence level cues to obtain meaning within the text.&lt;br&gt; Have students discern Tier 2 vocabulary in context:&lt;br&gt; priesthood (compound word)&lt;br&gt; margins (syllable type r-control)&lt;br&gt; possession (suffix – ion)&lt;br&gt; warriors (root word – war)&lt;br&gt; cautiously (suffixes – tious, ly)&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Morphemic analysis (study of prefixes, suffixes, and roots), cognates, using context clues around unknown word to determine pronunciation and meaning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus Area in Shared Reading</td>
<td>Application of CCSS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Text Structure</strong></td>
<td>CCSS.CCRA.RL.5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. section, chapter, scene or stanza) relate to each other and the whole ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</td>
<td>Day 2: Teacher leads construction of a collaborative story map with entire class, which requires occasional review of concept of summarizing, evaluating, and questioning, to glean the main ideas and discern the most important information from the text. Reviews parts of text as necessary.</td>
<td>Narrative story structure: main character(s), setting, problem, solution, main events, resolution, theme</td>
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<td>CCSS.CCRA.R.6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</td>
<td>Day 2: In partners, students select another story read previously to summarize using story map terminology.</td>
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<td><strong>Differentiating Instruction for Tiers 2 &amp; 3 on Day 2:</strong> Teacher models point of view summarizing through somebody/wanted/but/so/and (Beers, 2003) using “The Three Little Pigs.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Students construct individual point-of-view summaries using abridged version of <em>The Boy Who Drew Cats</em> (Shephard, 1997).</td>
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<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>CCSS.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</td>
<td>Day 3: (whole class) Model annotation using complex textual excerpt from <em>The Boy Who Drew Cats</em>.</td>
<td>Visualizing</td>
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<td><strong>Differentiating Instruction for Tiers 2 &amp; 3:</strong> Teacher models annotation using abridged version of the same story. Students annotate text on a two-column format through a series of symbols, dialogue and arrows.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>See standards for Day 1.</td>
<td>Day 4: (whole class) Interactive read-aloud using another version of <em>The Boy Who Drew Cats</em>. Deeper discussion of the commonalities and similarities of the two versions through the collaborative construction of a double-bubble map.</td>
<td>Accessing schema to aid in comprehension and in making connections between new and older information.</td>
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<td>CCSS.ELA.CCRA.9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take ([NGA &amp; CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10).</td>
<td><strong>Differentiating Instruction for Tiers 2 &amp; 3 on Day 4:</strong> Students annotated <em>The Art Lesson</em> (DePaola, 1989) while focusing on the similarities and differences between the characters and the main events of the story.</td>
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that undergird the concept of close reading. Although Table 2 summarizes the features of close reading, it is by no means is it an exhaustive list.

Zone of Proximal Development
Inherent within both methodologies is Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), the province between what a learner can do independently and the level of proficiency that can be attained through expert coaching. Additionally, the flexible pedagogies of shared and close reading invite inclusive, scaffolded, and multiple ways to accommodate students’ needs effectively, and align with the Universal Design for Learning Guidelines for students with special needs (UDL) (CAST, 2011). Designed to be used with all learners, the frameworks of shared and close reading can be molded to provide for special needs students through adherence to the precepts governing successful intervention.

Real-World Classroom Application of SRE and Close Reading
Mr. Michael Bennett, a fourth grade teacher in a small economically-poor rural district in his third year of teaching, sought the guidance of his former professor (this author) in working with struggling readers. Excited by the dual prospect of mentoring a novice teacher and working in the classroom we began a professional collaboration whose
Day 1 – Projection of a Visual Image and an Interactive Read-Aloud

Beginning with the projection of a visual image onto the interactive white board, students were asked to respond by writing or sketching their insights and impressions of an illustration from the text that had been divided into quadrants that were exposed one section at a time (Daniels & Steineke, 2011). This close reading of a visual text allowed students to anticipate the story elements before engaging in a close reading of the text itself.

The format of the lessons described within this article began with a daily 15-20 minute interactive read-aloud, conducted by Mr. Bennett. Following the teacher’s read-aloud in which the entire class participated, the university instructor modified lessons to afford tiered students the opportunity to attain similar core curriculum objectives without compromising expectations of standards. All lessons described in this article occurred within Mr. Bennett’s classroom during the course of one week during the 2012-2013 school year.


<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Checklist of Components for Close Reading Lesson</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Short passages</strong> (2-3 paragraphs up to two pages) to teach skills that students will use independently for navigating longer texts. May consist of short or shortened text.</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Complex Text:</strong> Taking into account the qualitative, quantitative and the reader and task considerations for the readability of a passage; may go beyond the independent reading level of the students, requiring teacher modeling of fluent oral reading.</td>
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<td>3. <strong>Limited Frontloading:</strong> Provide definitions of unknown words on an as-needed basis.</td>
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<td>4. <strong>Rereading:</strong> Students reread the text multiple times for the purpose of building on existing comprehension and meaning. Each successive reading beyond the initial read provides expanded background information.</td>
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<td>5. <strong>Text-Dependent Questions (TDQ)/Linking the Question to the Standard from the CCSS:</strong> Responding to questions about the big ideas in the text requires students to cite evidence from the text for their thinking.</td>
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<td>6. <strong>Discussion:</strong> Conversation emanates from sharing out responses to text-dependent questions.</td>
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<td>7. <strong>Annotation:</strong> “Reading with a pencil.” Students use a combination of coding, underlining, circling, post-it and margin notes directly on the text. Teacher circulates to identify patterns of confusion or erroneous understandings, which provides teaching points for clarification.</td>
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version of a Japanese legend, *The Boy Who Drew Cats* (Hodges, 2002). With a lexile of 830L, the text included the requisite qualitative dimensions of text complexity for grade four in providing a rigorous analysis of the deeper levels of meaning and the inherent structures within the story, while keeping in mind the quantitative aspects concerning sentence length and word frequency. Illustrations from the text coincided with the oral reading and were projected on the interactive white board.

Mr. Bennett strategically paired students with talking buddies in advance, thus garnering participation from everyone in the class. At intermittent stopping points during the read-aloud, he anticipated difficult phrases by discussing his thoughts through think-alouds. For example, he, read, “[Joji] liked to draw cats during study hours and draw cats even where cats ought not to have been drawn at all (Hodges, 2002, p. 7), Mr. Bennett mused, “In this sentence alone the author uses the word cats three times. I am thinking that she repeated the word cats because she wants the reader to know how important this word is in the story. Authors tend to repeat words when they want the reader to realize an important idea.” He continued by asking students text-dependent questions that required them to cite evidence for their thinking. Following the read-aloud, students reread a complex excerpt of the text for a closer discussion of the story elements, including how the setting of the story contributed to their understanding of the characters and events, and how the interrelationships enhanced their understanding of resolution, and theme.

**Day 2 – Summarizing through the Process of Story Map**

Following a rereading of *The Boy Who Drew Cats* (Hodges, 2002), the university instructor facilitated a class discussion of story elements, followed by a deconstruction of the text, focusing on the first three standards of the CCSS (see Figure 2). Then she introduced the concept of summarizing through story mapping by explaining to the students, “When we summarize, we tell what happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story, but we take only the most important information of the story – the events that drive the flow of the story.” Using the pasta analogy to help them extract the most relevant information from the text (Cummins, 2011), she said, ““Think of when your mom makes pasta. She puts the pasta in the pot of water. Then she takes the pasta out of the water and drains it. Do you want to eat pasta or water? When we summarize, we separate the pasta from the water” (Cummins, 2011, p. 22). In this way students would have a strategy for extracting the main ideas from extraneous detail.
Karen C. Waters helped students understand the key features of literary text as they summarized the familiar tale of *The Three Little Pigs* (Galdone, 1970). After the teacher modeled think-aloud summary statements from the point of view of the first and second little pigs, students collaborated with the teacher in the construction of a summary statement for the third little pig. The scaffolding of the summary statements from the perspectives of consideration of the features of the narrative at-hand in attempting to construct their own summaries using their “just right texts.” Through discussion and collaborative story mapping, students were able to refine their initial attempts to summarize.

**Day 2: Summarizing for Tiers 2 and 3**

In small group instruction, the simple strategy, somebody/wanted/but/so/and (adapted from Beers, 2003) helped students understand the key features of literary text as they summarized the familiar tale of *The Three Little Pigs* (Galdone, 1970).

A modified story map template based on Kissner’s (2006, p. 98-99) model provided a framework for revisiting the text so that students could perceive the interrelationships among the characters and events, which prepared them for a close reading activity focusing on a later lesson on syntax and diction. Students then worked in partners to create simple story maps so they might have the opportunity to consider the features of the narrative at-hand in attempting to construct their own summaries using their “just right texts.” Through discussion and collaborative story mapping, students were able to refine their initial attempts to summarize.

**Figure 2. Story Map for The Boy Who Drew Cats (Hodges, 2002).**

| Book Title: The Boy Who Drew Cats |
| **Setting:** (Time, place, and a little bit about the character) Japan, a long time ago |
| **Main Characters:** Joji, the boy who liked to draw cats  |
| Father, Joji’s father  |
| Priest, sent Joji away when he could not stop drawing cats. |
| **Point of View:** Story told in the 3rd person. |
| **Problem:** Joji spent all his time drawing cats, and could not think about doing anything else. |
| **Solution:** The priest banished him from the temple because he was disobedient. |
| **Event 1:** Joji was a young Chinese boy who was too weak to help out on the farm, so his parents brought him to a temple so that he could become a priest. |
| **Event 2:** However, Joji drew cats when he was supposed to read and write with the other students. |
| **Event 3:** Soon Joji’s habit of drawing cats made the priest angry, and the priest told him to pack his things and leave the temple, but warned him to “avoid large places at night and keep to small.” |
| **Event 4:** But Joji was afraid to go home because he knew that his father would be angry, so he stopped at another temple in a nearby village. |
| **Event 5:** When he saw blank screens, he began to draw cats everywhere until he felt sleepy, and he went to sleep in a little cabinet. |
| **Event 6:** In the morning, he saw a dead monster rat in the middle of the room that had been killed when his drawings of the cats came to life. |
| **Solution:** Joji’s habit of drawing cats ultimately saved the lives of people from a monster rat. |
| **Theme:** Follow your heart. Joji wanted to draw cats, and even though his parents and the priest tried to discourage him, he continued to draw cats. Eventually, he became a hero when his drawings came to life and killed the monster rat in the town. |
the first and second little pigs was sufficient for students to be able to work in partners to complete the table from the point of view of the wolf as shown in Figure 3.

Scaffolding the construction of summary statements through collaboration with the teacher prepared them to independently summarize *The Boy Who Drew Cats* using the somebody/wanted/but/so/and format for each of the characters. In preparation for this activity students participated in a shared reading of the text, beginning with a read aloud of an abridged version of *The Boy Who Drew Cats*, (Shephard, 1997). During the second read, students were invited to read along with the teacher. Rereading the text, a procedural feature included in both shared and close reading, promotes fluent and accurate reading and increases comprehension.

Following the third reading of the story, students worked to complete the somebody/wanted/but/so/and chart for each of the main characters in *The Boy Who Drew Cats* using the previous template (see Figure 4). Summarizing the story from the point of view of the main characters aligns with CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6 ([NGA & CCSSO], 2010a, p. 10). Figure 4 shows a completed point-of-view summary for each of the main characters in the abridged version.

### Day 3. Annotating the Text for Tiers 2 & 3

While Mr. Bennett, taught Tier I students how to annotate text in a close reading using a complex portion of the original text, the university instructor formatted an abridged version of the story into two columns, conducive for showing students in tiers two and three how to “read with a pencil” (Fisher et al., 2012, p. 111). She explained that annotating the text is like having an inner conversation with the writer (Paul & Elder, 2006), and she modeled her own thinking as she wrote in the margin.

An additional reading of the text during shared reading allowed for deeper discussion of the text into which aspects of close reading were integrated. Students concluded that the author's use of repetition for the word “cats" revealed that he thought it was important to emphasize the main character's obsession for drawing cats. Identifying examples of onomatopoeia that occurred within the story, including “rrrrrr," yowl, roar, and thud, students acknowledged that the author’s word choices helped them deepen their understanding of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scaffold</th>
<th>Somebody</th>
<th>wanted</th>
<th>but</th>
<th>so</th>
<th>and</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher modeling</td>
<td>The lazy first little pig</td>
<td>to spend his time having fun so he quickly built his house out of straw</td>
<td>the house wasn’t strong enough</td>
<td>the big bad wolf huffed and puffed and blew the house down</td>
<td>the first little pig went to live with the second little pig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher modeling</td>
<td>The lazy second little pig</td>
<td>to spend his time having fun so he quickly built his house out of sticks</td>
<td>the house still wasn’t strong to keep the big bad wolf away</td>
<td>the wolf huffed and puffed and blew the house down</td>
<td>both the first and second little pigs went to live with the third little pig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration between teacher and students</td>
<td>The hard-working third little pig</td>
<td>to live a safe and peaceful life so he built his house out of bricks</td>
<td>his brothers came a-knocking because they were afraid of the big bad wolf</td>
<td>he let them in</td>
<td>they waited for the big bad wolf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students complete in partnerships</td>
<td>The wolf</td>
<td>to eat the three little pigs</td>
<td>the pigs put a pot of boiling water on the <em>hearth</em> of the fire place</td>
<td>the wolf went roaring from the house</td>
<td>he never bothered them again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3. Somebody/Wanted/But/So/And to Summarize Point of View (adapted from Beers, 2003)*
story and subsequently completed the annotation of the text using a combination of arrows, dialogue, and symbols. Figure 5 shows one student’s “inner conversation” as he made predictions in the margins of the excerpted text.

Day 4. Using a Second Version of the Text
Mike conducted read-aloud for the entire class using another version of *The Boy Who Drew Cats* (Levine, 1993) so that students might have an opportunity to compare the two versions in terms of characters, events, themes, language, illustrations and text structure. This third version, written in rich literary style, provided graceful and detailed illustrations that lent themselves to deeper discussion of diction and syntax; students could easily discern the tone and mood of the story through an analysis of the thoughts and feelings of the characters. The university instructor modeled the construction of a double-bubble map (Hyerle & Yaeger, 2007) to depict the commonalities and differences of the two different versions of *The Boy Who Drew Cats* (Figure 6). Demonstrating student knowledge through thinking maps as an alternate way to represent content learning has proven to have had a significant effect on the performance of English Language Learners and special needs students on state assessments (Hyerle & Yaeger, 2007).

Students worked in partnerships to construct their own comparison charts on just-right books of their own choosing; they felt empowered at the prospect of drawing as many “bubbles” as needed to accommodate and chart the similarities and differences within texts. Unconstrained by the limited space imposed by the traditional Venn Diagram, the double-bubble map allowed students to perceive the semantic relationships in comparing two versions of a story and served as the basis for a comparison essay of the two versions of *The Boy Who Drew Cats* (Hodge, 2002; Levine, 1993) (see Figure 6).

Day 4. Annotating the Text for Tiers 2 and 3
Students annotated the text for *The Art Lesson* (DePaola, 1989) using the two-column format similar to the one used on Day 3. With a grade equivalent of 4.0 and a lexile measure of
650L, the text provided a balance of appropriate challenges and supports, yet sufficiently complex to warrant meaty discussion. Students acknowledged ostensible differences in the events and theme without prompting. Having them annotate the text prepared them for essay writing.

Day 5. Deeper Discussion with Entire Class
An illustration from the text projected on the interactive white board was used to begin a discussion of tone and mood. Using their schema and their knowledge of the story, the university instructor asked students to study the image by paying attention to the emotions, feelings, facial expressions, the setting, the objects within the visual image, and the motivation of the characters. She told them that lighting in a picture is oftentimes associated with the mood, and that the tone is the author’s attitude toward the subject. Students were asked to jot down their questions, insights, predictions, and impressions and to write a title for the illustration before they shared their insights with their turn-and-talk partner. The visual image not only motivated students to discuss the relationship between the main characters of the story, but enabled them to garner meaning from the characters’ facial expressions in relating the event to the illustration and to the story in its entirety.

The university instructor introduced a house graphic (Drasch, Weingart & Elias-Staron (2012) (see Figure 7) as a framework for guiding a close reading of excerpted text from The Boy Who Drew Cats (Levine, 1993). Focusing on Standard 4 of the CCSS, students were encouraged to think about the special words and phrases in the story that the author used to clarify how “specific word choices shape meaning or tone” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 10). The categories of words included, emotions, strong words, sounds, figures of speech and literary devices as reflected in the “basement” portion of the graphic. Projecting selected portions of the text allowed everyone access to the same text. By emphasizing the words and phrases of the author, students began to develop an appreciation of tone and mood as the following discussion shows:

Lori: The mother swallowed her sorrow when she took Kenji to the monastery. I guess she was afraid because her son was sick. You really can’t swallow sorrow, so it must be a literary technique that means doing something even though you are sad.

Teacher: That’s called an idiom. It is an expression used to convey a particular meaning, which is separate from the words. Another example of an idiom is “pulling your leg.”
texts, and allowed them to grow and begin to develop the skills that they will use throughout their lifetimes. Using the same text for five days in a shared reading approach not only enabled special needs students, English Language Learners, and other struggling readers to increase fluency and accuracy in oral reading, but also empowered them to deepen their comprehension and their understanding of the implicit messages within the narrative through reading excerpts closely. Introducing a second version of the story mid-week nudged

As students discussed the nuances of the vocabulary and phrases, the university instructor scribed their responses onto chart paper, which was completed over two sessions whose duration was fifteen minutes. They worked their way from the “basement” of the graphic to the “roof” as they progressed from the categories of “details” to the setting of the story where students discussed the places in which events of the story occurred. They easily identified the characters and the point of view and the goal of each of the characters. They referred back to the categories of word choice when discussing the tone and mood of the story. By the

**Conclusion**

“Struggling readers do more oral reading during their lessons than do better readers” (Allington, 2013, p. 526), resulting in fewer opportunities for them to apply foundational learning in authentic reading contexts. However, embedding skill instruction into authentic reading and writing activities encouraged less proficient students to construct meaning across texts, and allowed them to grow and begin to develop the skills that they will use throughout their lifetimes. Using the same text for five days in a shared reading approach not only enabled special needs students, English Language Learners, and other struggling readers to increase fluency and accuracy in oral reading, but also empowered them to deepen their comprehension and their understanding of the implicit messages within the narrative through reading excerpts closely. Introducing a second version of the story mid-week nudged

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Lakeisha: I know that one: it means that someone is teasing you.

Kent: It says that “sleep pressed against his eyes.” It’s like a fancy way to say that he was tired.

Rachael: And that’s not the only fancy word that the author uses. The old priest was “stern as stone.” I guess that means that the priest was pretty mean.

Brandon: That’s a simile because of the “as” [in the phrase stern as stone]

Katie: There’s another simile with “like” when it says that the old priest appeared “like a thundercloud.”

Tyler: You see the word cats a lot. He painted cats. Powerful cats. Sleek cats. Alert cats. Do ya think the author wants us to know that Kenji liked drawing cats because he kept repeating the word “cats?”

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**Figure 7. The completed house graphic, adapted from Drash, H., Elias-Staron, K., & Weingart, H. (2012), House graphic, EASTCONN. Used with permission**
students into a critical comparison through close reading, as they reconsidered authors’ purposes and developed a greater appreciation of the themes.

“The purpose of an intervention system is not to place a student in a program, service, or setting, but to identify the student’s needs and implement a plan to meet them” (ICLE, 2011, p. 9). Guided by the principles of principles of UDL (CAST, 2011), the university instructor and the classroom teacher customized the shared and close reading strategies for struggling learners to support students’ unique differences and backgrounds, resulting in increased success for students who had been previously disenfranchised by the traditional core curriculum. In a class of 27 students in which eight had been identified to receive tier 2 and three to receive tier 3 instruction, all except one student demonstrated significant gains in oral reading fluency and comprehension as reflected on district progress monitoring instruments during the period from October to June.

What’s Next?
Initial attempts to accommodate struggling readers through a merging of the pedagogies of shared and close reading is just the first of many steps that will be necessary for incremental change. Implications may not be fully realized until after the next generation of assessments have been fully implemented, and ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the classroom routine. Indeed, the ramifications of customizing pedagogy for the neediest students have yet to be determined, awaiting implementation by competing consortia, which are designed to measure academic growth, rather than the academic deficits of diverse special needs populations (SBAC, 2012).

For years, teachers’ attempts to differentiate instruction have been nullified by unforgiving and inconsiderate assessments, which have yielded unfair and inaccurate measures of actual ability (ICLE, 2011). Currently at the piedmont of a revitalized assessment system, district administrators, teachers, teacher educators, reading specialists, and support personnel can only begin to speculate about the vast implications of computer-adapted technology on existing pedagogy and intervention, and the extent to which student performance data be used to inform, and transform instruction and intervention (2011). To that end, reading professionals, special educators, test developers, researchers, and statisticians will continue to ponder the validity of the new and improved assessments, and the role of research in the cyclical process of curriculum and instruction.

Bridging the divide between RTI and the CCSS will continue to necessitate a rethinking and a continual revisiting of research-based practices and pedagogies to continue to address students’ developmental needs, inclusive of assessments that are sensitive to the differences in diverse populations. Future research agendas will need to include reliable and valid measures for ongoing modification of time-honored research-based practices in a confluence of ideals and purpose that consider strategic ways to propel student performance.

Closing the gap between less proficient readers and their more capable peers will require more than deliberate scaffolding of meaningful instruction. Curricular alignment of instruction and assessments in a contiguous framework embedded with the principles of UDL, a coherent core curriculum, and the CCSS would establish the foundation for all students, regardless of tier or diagnostic identifier, to succeed.

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