

Every Learner, Every Text: Inclusive and Evidence-Informed Practices

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ABSTRACT

The Spring 2026 issue of the *Georgia Journal of Literacy*, themed “*Every Learner, Every Text: Inclusive and Evidence-Informed Practices*,” highlights the ongoing interplay between evidence-informed literacy instruction and responsive, inclusive teaching. Across an interview with Nancy Frey, research articles, and classroom-based teaching tips, each contributor explores how literacy educators can support learners through instructional practices grounded in research while also honoring student identity, voice, belonging, and access. Topics in this issue include current perspectives on literacy instruction, dialogic inquiry in syllabus design, usage-based grammar instruction, Science of Reading lesson planning, social-emotional learning through children’s literature, and authentic literary response through picturebooks. Collectively, the articles demonstrate that effective literacy instruction does not require educators to choose between rigor and responsiveness. Instead, this issue emphasizes how evidence-informed teaching and inclusive literacy practices can work together to create meaningful learning experiences for all students.

KEYWORDS

literacy instruction; inclusive pedagogy; evidence-informed practice; Science of Reading; children’s literature; social-emotional learning; dialogic inquiry; grammar instruction

In literacy education, we are often positioned between two important commitments: fidelity to evidence and fidelity to the learners sitting in front of us. One side calls for explicit instruction, evidence-informed practices, structured routines, and measurable outcomes, while the other emphasizes identity, belonging, representation, voice, and meaningful engagement with texts and with one another. At times, these conversations are framed as competing priorities. Yet the strongest literacy instruction has never truly belonged to one side or the other. Instead, effective literacy teaching exists in the space where rigor and responsiveness work in unity (Beauchemin et al., 2026). This Spring 2026 issue of the *Georgia Journal of Literacy*, themed “*Every Learner, Every Text: Inclusive and Evidence-Informed Practices*,” highlights scholars and practitioners who navigate that space thoughtfully, demonstrating that research-informed instruction and human-centered teaching are not opposing forces, but complementary ones.

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Research and Practitioner Pieces: Centering *Every Learner* and *Every Text*

The phrase “*Every Learner, Every Text*” reflects two central ideas woven throughout this issue. First, every learner deserves access to literacy instruction grounded in intentional, evidence-informed practice. Second, every learner deserves opportunities to encounter texts that invite reflection, connection, curiosity, and a sense of belonging. Some articles in this collection lean more heavily toward instructional systems and evidence-based frameworks, while others emphasize empathy, identity, and inclusive classroom communities. Together, however, they remind us that literacy instruction is most effective when it remains attentive to both the science of learning and the humanity of learners (Bailey & Wilkinson, 2025; Beauchemin et al., 2026). The opening interview with literacy scholar Dr. Nancy Frey further reflects the balance between evidence-informed literacy instruction and responsive, human-centered teaching, while also highlighting the importance of listening to the voices of dedicated educators and researchers shaping literacy practice today.

An Interview on Literacy, Research, and Responsive Practice

This issue opens with “Through a Literacy Lens: An Interview with Nancy Frey” by Dr. Matthew Sroka and Dr. Vicki Luther. Drawing from her work in secondary schools and teacher education, Frey reflects on declining reading motivation (Bone et al., 2025; Webber et al., 2025), the relationship between achievement and motivation, technology in today’s schools, including the use of artificial intelligence, and the importance of productive classroom discussion and writing. Throughout the conversation, Frey emphasizes that meaningful literacy instruction depends on creating opportunities for students to experience success, think critically, and actively engage with texts and one another. At a time when educators continue navigating shifting technologies and instructional demands, the interview offers a thoughtful reminder that effective literacy instruction remains grounded in responsive teaching, professional collaboration, and meaningful human connection.

Centering Voice, Reflection, and Inquiry

The research section continues with Dr. T. Hunter Strickland’s “Introspection and Dialogic Inquiry in Creating Young Adult Literature Course Syllabi.” Drawing on Bakhtin’s concepts of heteroglossia and dialogic pedagogy, Strickland examines how course syllabi and instructional materials reflect tensions between institutional authority and student-centered teaching practices. Through an analysis of young adult literature course syllabi, the article highlights how teacher educators create space for student voice, choice, and dialogic engagement while navigating the broader educational and political discourses that shape classroom instruction.

Usage-Based Grammar Instruction and Adverbials

In “From Awareness to Application: Examining the Effectiveness of Usage-Based Grammar Instruction on Adverbials,” Dr. Pouya Vakili shifts attention toward explicit language instruction and applied learning in an undergraduate writing class. Grounded in usage-based grammar theory, the study examines how intentional, contextualized teaching can strengthen both conceptual understanding and written application. Rather than treating grammar as isolated memorization or correction, Vakili demonstrates how students develop deeper language awareness when learning emphasizes meaningful use and transfer. Vakili’s work reinforces the value of structured,

evidence-informed teaching while also reminding readers that grammar learning is most effective when connected to authentic communication and writing.

Representation, Belonging, and Neuro-Affirming Literacy Spaces

The issue then turns to questions of representation, inclusion, and neuro-affirming literacy instruction, as outlined in Dr. Terry Husband's "Using Neuro-Affirming Picture Books in Early Childhood Classrooms." Drawing attention to the role picture books can play in shaping children's understandings of neurodiversity (Amador, 2024), Husband explores how thoughtfully selected texts can support children with neurodiverse learning needs while also encouraging empathy, advocacy, and more strengths-based perspectives among their peers. Through both research-informed discussion and a practical classroom application centered on dyslexia, the article highlights the importance of literacy spaces where children experience affirmation, belonging, and opportunities to see diverse ways of learning and thinking represented in meaningful ways.

Teaching Tips: Evidence-Informed, Inclusive, and Authentic

The final section of the issue offers three teaching-focused pieces that connect research-informed practices with practical classroom application. In "From Blocks to Blueprints: Using the Science of Learning to Strengthen Science of Reading Instruction," Dr. Carla Williams presents a streamlined planning framework designed to reduce unnecessary cognitive load while protecting the essential components of effective literacy instruction. Drawing on principles from both the Science of Learning and the Science of Reading, the framework emphasizes explicit instruction, cumulative review, retrieval practice, and meaningful transfer. Rather than adding complexity to teachers' work, the article offers a practical structure that helps educators maintain clarity and intentionality in literacy planning.

In "Teaching Across Differences: Using *Elvis & Romeo* to Foster Inclusive Classroom Communities," Dr. Renee Cowan explores how children's literature can support social-emotional learning and relationship building in elementary classrooms (Deliman et al., 2024). Centered on the story of two very different dogs who gradually learn to appreciate one another, the article offers practical strategies for helping students develop empathy, perspective-taking, and inclusive behaviors through literacy instruction. By embedding discussion and collaborative classroom routines into daily learning experiences, the article highlights how thoughtfully selected texts can help students build meaningful connections with both literature and one another.

The issue concludes with "Story Events and Student Questions: Pairing *Books Aren't for Bears* with a Strategy for Literature Circle Talk" by Dr. William Bintz and Shabnam Moini Chaghervand, an article that highlights the power of picturebooks and authentic literary response in literacy classrooms. Centered on the picture book *Books Aren't for Bears*, the article introduces a practical instructional strategy designed to help students identify important story events, engage in meaningful discussion, and develop personal connections to literature. Through literature circles, reflective questioning, and interdisciplinary learning opportunities, the authors emphasize that literacy instruction is most meaningful when students are invited to actively respond to texts, share their thinking with others, and see reading as an experience for everyone. Fittingly, the article closes with a warm invitation that captures the spirit of both the piece and this issue as a whole: "Happy reading!"

Moving Forward with *Every Learner in Mind*

Taken together, the contributions in this issue invite readers to consider what it means to teach literacy with both intentionality and humanity. Across interviews, research studies, and classroom teaching tips, this collection reminds us that literacy learning is about more than isolated skills. It is about helping learners make meaning, build relationships, engage with ideas, and see themselves within the worlds that texts create. As you engage with this issue, we invite you to reflect on your own literacy spaces and consider how instruction can remain both evidence-informed and responsive to the diverse learners in our classrooms.

The work of literacy educators continues to evolve alongside changing classrooms, technologies, and student needs. Yet across those changes, one idea remains constant: literacy instruction matters deeply because learners matter deeply. We extend our sincere appreciation to the authors and reviewers whose scholarship and commitment made this issue of the *Georgia Journal of Literacy* possible. It is our hope that the ideas shared throughout this issue encourage continued reflection, conversation, and action as educators work to honor *every learner* and *every text*.

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