

# LITERACY SYMPOSIUM

AT THE FOREFRONT OF LITERACY LEARNING



## INTRODUCTION

---

Greetings, fellow educators!

I hope this August issue of *At the Forefront of Literacy* newsletter finds you well.

In line with the 2022 UCF Literacy Symposium theme, *Reigniting Literacy Collaborations*, this month I chose to focus on the importance of **reigniting our collaborations with students around reading and literacy!** Why? Well, what better time than the beginning of the school year to get to know our students' reading lives and identities as readers?

Strong relationships are essential to students' learning, sense of belonging in the classroom, and achievement. As you get ready for the new school year, I invite you to invest time getting to know your students as readers. The simple act of talking to, inquiring, and connecting with students about their reading lives and interests has the potential to inform your instruction and enrich your students' relationship with reading. Tapping into students' reading lives, interests, knowledge, and skills will help you (a) create a supportive, engaging, and language- and literacy-rich learning environment, (b) provide relevant and effective reading instruction to all students, and (c) strengthen reader motivation, interests, and engagement with reading, literacy, and learning.

I hope this newsletter supports your literacy and learning needs. I would love to hear what you think about this content or ideas you have for future topics and resources—feel free to share your feedback here: [LitSymposium@ucf.edu](mailto:LitSymposium@ucf.edu).

We are excited about our upcoming Fall 2022 virtual webinars and workshops! We will notify all event subscribers via email and will also post them on our [homepage](#).

Until next time, wishing you a great start to your school year!

*Vicky Zygoris-Coe, Ph.D.*  
Professor, Reading Education  
Founder & Organizer, UCF Literacy Symposium



## RESEARCH BITES: LONG STORY SHORT

---

This question guided my search: *In what ways does research inform us about the importance of teacher-student collaborations on reading/literacy?*

I selected a research-to-practice article titled, [From Surviving to Thriving: Four Research-Based Principles to Build Students' Reading Interest](#) (Springer, Harris, & Dole, 2017). This article informed my question and extended it by allowing me to draw implications about the importance of talking with our students about their reading lives, reader identities and interests.

Here are some research bites from this report:

- This article presents the following four research-based principles of reading interest that are applicable to all students across grade levels and offers practical ways for use in the classroom: (1) individual interests, (2) situational interest, (3) text-based interest, and (4) interest regulation.
- Student interest has a strong impact on students' reading. Students who are interested in a particular topic will show more willingness to read related texts.
- When students are interested in a text that they are reading, their comprehension and stamina improves (even when reading complex texts), they have better recall, and invest more cognitive and socio-emotional effort in the reading process.
- Individual interest is connected to more self-directed reading.
- Teacher-student reading conferences provide teachers with valuable information about reader interests, reader identities, and reading lives.
- Teachers can create situational interest through instructional activities that are inviting, interesting, collaborative, and engaging.
- Teachers should include diverse, relevant, interesting, coherent texts, and multimedia resources to support students' reading and literacy engagement, skills, and learning.

Students will benefit from instruction on how to regulate their reading and comprehension when the text is complex or uninteresting.



# RESEARCH TO PRACTICE TAKEAWAYS

---

The following takeaways can help you *reignite* your literacy collaborations with students in your classrooms.

1. Do you want your students to become better readers? Do not underestimate the power of getting to know them!
2. The beginning of the school year is a great time to get to know your readers (e.g., talking with students, asking them questions about their experiences with reading, their interests, their reading lives, and anything that will help you connect with them).
3. When students know their voices and interests are heard and respected, they are more willing to participate, share, listen to others' voices, and reflect on their own learning.
4. Use interest inventories, teacher-student conferences, writing, and other means to tap into students' interests, voices, and perspectives on reading/literacy.
5. Creating a culture of reading and literacy in your classroom requires supportive, equitable, and collaborative partnerships with students.
6. Getting to know your students and creating positive relationships with them will also help you create a classroom environment that encourages students to love reading, speaking, writing, creating, and to want to grow in their skills and learning.
7. Discuss with students your expectations for reading/literacy success in your classroom (e.g., choosing books to read, talking about books with peers about what they are reading, writing about books they read, monitoring their reading).
8. Design instructional activities that are engaging and inviting and provide materials and supports that will maximize participation and stamina for all students. Collaborative inquiry activities help support student engagement in reading/literacy.
9. To get the pulse of your classroom's reading culture and student interests, consider any of the following to observe and/or discuss in teacher-student conferences with your students:
  - *Do students see themselves as readers? You can use prompts such as: "Tell me about yourself as a reader."*
  - *Do students talk about their reading inside and outside of school (i.e., what they read, where they read, with whom they read, and how long they read)? What do you know about their reading lives and interests inside and outside the classroom?*
  - *Do they talk positively, negatively, or avoid talking about what they are reading?*
  - *Do students talk about books they would like to read?*
  - *How do students choose books to read? What do students consider when choosing books (e.g., genre, topic, print or digital, book title, cover, length, or*

recommendations).

- Do students voluntarily check out books from your classroom and school library?
  - Do students recommend books to peers?
  - How do students read? What is their process? What do they pay attention to when they read?
  - How capable do students feel as they try to comprehend texts?
  - Do you talk with students about their engagement? When do they feel engaged and disengaged with reading certain texts? Ask for an example. Do you discuss with students what they'd like to work on in their reading and what kinds of help they'd like to have?
10. To spark joy about, and interest in, reading/literacy in your classroom: (a) share your reading life with students; (b) model how you read, think, and write; (c) find out about your students' reading interests; (d) make reading/literacy a social experience; (e) model reading for pleasure; (f) make diverse, relevant, and interesting books and technology available in your classroom; (g) give students choice over what books to read; and (h) use think alouds and model how students can regulate their reading and comprehension when the text is challenging and less interesting to read.



## 1 QUESTION FOR YOU

---

Here's some food for thought...

- What is one small, attainable action you can take to *reignite* your reading/literacy collaborations with your students?



## RESOURCES

---

These resources can inspire and facilitate your collaborative goals.

### *Elementary School*

- [3 Teacher-Approved Tips to Help Students Build Positive Reading Identities in the Classroom \(Grades 1-5\)](#)
- [6 Steps for Helping Students Set Strong Reading Goals \(Grades K-5\)](#)
- [Developing a Love of Reading in Students](#)
- [Motivating Students to Read](#)
  
- [Reading Survey for Students: Getting to Know your New Class of Readers](#)

### *Middle – High School*

- [Starting the Year in Reading on the Right Foot](#) (Grades 6-12)
- [Relationship Building from Day 1](#) (Grades 6-12)
- [6 Exercises to Get to Know Your Students' Better and Increase their Engagement](#)  
(Grades 6-12)
- [ELA Activities to Start the School Year](#) (Grades 6-8)
- [Puzzle Out Reader Identity—3 Strategies to Elevate Reader Identity in Reading Workshop](#)  
(Grades 6-8)

### *K-12*

- [8 Strategies for Building Relationships with ELLs](#)
- [Getting to Know Your ELLs: 6 Steps for Success](#)
- [Getting to Know Them: What Kind of readers Are Your Students?](#)
- [How to Instill the Love of Reading](#)

### [What Kids are Reading 2022 Report](#)

[Subscribe](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)



[Follow us on Facebook](#)

Use #UCFLitSymposium when tweeting!