Using authentic literature to develop challenging and integrated curriculum

This article acknowledges the difficulties in using authentic literature instead of predictable and linear textbooks, while articulating methods for developing an alternative practice that promises the nurturing of lifelong literacy as a spillover benefit.

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Dr. William Alexander, a noted curriculum authority and a central founder of the middle school movement, shared in a presentation in 1963 that teachers must have a goal of stimulating a "love for learning, an attitude of inquiry, a passion for truth and beauty, a questioning of mind" (National Middle School Association, 2010, pp. 3–4). He asserted, "Learning the right answers is not enough. . . beyond answers alone, we must help children ask the right questions, and discover their answers through creative thinking, reasoning, judging, and understanding." (NMSA, 2010, pp. 3–4). Although Alexander was quoting a belief statement from Winnetka Public Schools in Illinois where he was a superintendent, his words remain inspirational today to middle grades teachers across the country—including those of us who read the pages of this journal—and Alexander's ideals have been influential in the development of the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) position paper, *This We Believe*.

We know that developing challenging and integrated curriculum so foundational to successful middle school is not easy; it is messy and in and of itself, challenging. What makes it even more challenging is that the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) emphasize that students must be given opportunities to grapple with "works of exceptional craft and thought" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 35). The range of these works must not only extend across genres but also across culture and across time. Both challenges must be accepted.

This article responds to *This We Believe* by describing one attempt to develop challenging and integrated curriculum. It also responds to CCSS by describing how authentic literature can be used with instructional strategies to support learning across the curriculum.

This article shares a brief review of related literature. Next, instructional strategies to use with authentic literature are shared. The article concludes with final thoughts about using authentic literature to develop challenging and integrated curriculum.

Authentic literature's scholarly context

While no single, simple definition for authentic literature exists in the *Literacy Dictionary* (Harris & Hodges, 1995), we know that authentic texts are published for a wide audience beyond schools (i.e., the general public) and includes varied forms such as picture books, novels, and informational text. Much professional literature indicates that when teachers use authentic literature in the classroom, good things happen. For example, when teachers use authentic literature, student motivation,

enthusiasm, and interest increases (Billman, 2002; Broemmel & Rearden, 2006; Chick, 2006; Lindquist, 2002; Soalt, 2005; Zambo, 2005). Students are highly engaged and often extend learning opportunities on their own. Students' vocabulary increases significantly when teachers use authentic literature (Fang & Wei, 2010; Gareis, Allard, & Saindon, 2009). This is due to the fact that authentic literature includes rich language, both figurative and informational. Teachers can use this rich language to help students analyze, among other things, word families, study prefixes, suffixes, and roots; learn synonyms, antonyms, and paraphrases; and explore idioms, collocations, and registers (Gareis, et al., 2009). In short, the language of authentic literature has keen relevance to the everyday language used by young adolescents in the communities where they reside.

In addition, when teachers use authentic literature, students learn content area material more efficiently and effectively. George & Stix (2000) refer to this as helping content area material come alive. Moreover, authentic literature engages students' in higher order thinking skills (George & Stix, 2000; Villano, 2005) and maximizes students' understanding of the specific content being studied (Atkinson, Matusevich, & Huber, 2009; Shelley, 2007; Taliaferro, 2009; Villano, 2005). In sum, when teachers use authentic literature, good things happen not only in language arts, but also across the curriculum.

Authentic literature across the curriculum

When using authentic literature across the curriculum, teachers should consider building a classroom library that includes narrative and informational texts written at various levels that reflect wide interests. Many types of authentic literature can be used as instructional tools in the content areas. Picture books (Albright, 2002; Murphy, 2009), young adult literature (Bean, 2003), and nonfiction trade books (Palmer & Stewart, 1997) all contain multiple rich concepts to assist teachers and young adolescents in building relevance and understanding.

Many examples of authentic literature can be used across the curriculum. Here, several criteria were used to share specific pieces of literature. For example, only newly published literature was considered because the goal was to introduce new literature to the content area classroom. Second, particular attention was paid to award-winning literature. The International Reading Association (IRA), National Council of English Teachers (NCTE), National Council of Social Studies (NCSS), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) are just a few of many organizations that recognize and honor award-winning literature. Finally, literature that stood out as being outstanding or unique in some way was considered. For instance, some literature is unique in the way it integrates content with the story line, and others are unique in the presentation style or design format. Based on these criteria, three categories of authentic literature emerged: picture books, novels, and nonfiction trade books. Each category discussed in the pages that follow identifies two high-quality, even award winning, pieces of literature, a synopsis of each, instructional strategies linked to the CCSS, and other recommended examples of authentic literature. The CCSS emphasize that students should be

Figure 1 Authentic literature exemplars

Abdul-Jabbar, K. & Obstfeld, R. (2012). *What color is my world: The lost history of African-American inventors.* Somersville, MA: Candlewick Press.

Bartoletti, S.C. (2008). *The boy who dared.* New York: Scholastic.

Buyea, R. (2010). *Because of Mr. Terupt.* New York: Delacorte Press.

Coombs, K. (2012). *Water sings blue.* San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.

Kamkwamba, W., Mealer, B., & Zunon, E. (2012). *The boy who harnessed the wind.* New York: Dial.

Kadohata, C. (2006). *Weedflower.* New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Lewis, J.P. (2012). *National Geographic book of animal poetry: 200 poems with photographs that squeak, soar, and roar.* Des Moines, IA: National Geographic Children's Books.

Novesky, A. (2012). *Georgia in Hawaii: When Georgia O'Keeffe painted what she pleased.* Boston: Harcourt Children's Books.

Park, L.S. (2002). *When my name was Keoko.* Boston: Sandpiper.

Palacio, R.J. (2012). *Wonder.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Rodriguez, R.V. (2006). *Through Georgia's eyes.* New York: Henry Holt & Company.

Sepetys, R. (2011). *Between shades of gray.* New York: Speak.

Smith, L. (2012). *Abe Lincoln's dream.* New York: Roaring Book Press.

Smith, L. (2006). *John, Paul, George, and Ben.* New York: Hyperion.

Van Drannen, W. (2001). *Flipped.* New York: Random House.

Winter, J. (2003). *My name is Georgia: A portrait by Jeanette Winter.* New York: Sandpiper Press.

able to analyze multiple texts connected by theme or topic in order to increase content knowledge as well as compare approaches that authors take. Recommending books to pair with the showcased books may provide ideas for additional resources.

Picture books

Integrating picture books into the content areas is a way to bring texts of various levels and genres into the classroom. With an average of 32 pages in length, picture books captivate visual learners with illustrations on every page or every page spread. Picture books appeal to readers of all ages and, while they are shorter than a novel, many are highly sophisticated due to their compacted language combined with rich aesthetic displays. They bring the content alive and enable a middle level teacher to emphasize concepts, thereby potentially building relevance in multiple ways. According to Murphy (2009), picture books can lead students to a greater understanding of the world around them. Not only are they entertaining and informative, picture books may also captivate those students who are not interested in academic learning in general or the specific content being studied. Picture books provide students an opportunity to connect to the material being studied in a meaningful way (Taliaferro, 2009; Villano, 2005), and they can build curiosity in middle level students, true to the important emphasis on exploratory education that successful middle schools should embrace. The connection-making that picture books create so easily and so profusely may increase diffident or recalcitrant students' motivation to learn, as well.

Picture books may be used by teachers to explore other forms or genres of literature (Murphy, 2009) by demonstrating the way that rich relationships can be built between books. Through these demonstrations, common barriers that interrupt learning may be overcome. Routman (2000) recommends using picture books as an ice breaker to engage students' sensibilities and capture their attention. Picture books also provide a necessary outlet for students to share their feelings and emotions about the topic they are studying. It gives teachers an avenue to engage students in constructing their own meaning of what they are learning through their thinking and their conversations.

Picture books may also be used as "way-in" books (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997). According to Bintz (2011), "way-in books are high-quality, often award-winning texts that provide students a 'way-in' – an unexpected entry into a world of topics they might find interesting to explore" (pp. 34–35). These books are tools for exploration. They give students a way to inquire as well as an opportunity to pose questions and arouse curiosities. Because picture books are short in length but rich in appeal, they may be used as "way-in" books frequently and with great benefits. Here are a few.

What Color is My World? The Lost History of African-American Inventors (Abdul-Jabbar, & Obstfeld, 2012) is unique in its construction and holds multiple instructional opportunities. The story begins with a mother telling her two adolescent twins they will have to use their imagination to appreciate the dilapidated house they have just moved into. While mother goes to get supplies, the twins help a handyman who was hired to help with the renovations. The handyman tells the twins that the house has exquisite craftsmanship and is a culmination of human progress. He shares that it is a "celebration of humankind, the history of America, and the history of African Americans" (Abdul-Jabbar & Obstfeld, 2012, p. 3). Interesting facts about African-American inventors are interwoven throughout the story of the twins working with the handyman. Even though the twins were far from thrilled about the prospect of working with the handyman at the beginning, they convince him to spend more than his allotted time sharing information about the famous inventors.

According to Broemmel and Rearden (2006), books need to be more than just interesting; they also need to have visual features to motivate the student. The format of this book is not only appealing, but it provides teachers with a valuable tool for reading instruction. This mulitgenre book has interesting facts and information interwoven with page flaps, diagrams, and comic-like formats. This format is consistent with the CCSS (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) in that students must be able to "integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats" (p. 35). Because the type of text is intermixed, readers will need to be cognizant of what type of text solicits what type of reading in order to be read proficiently. Students may make their thinking evident by reflecting on their reading practices while collaborating with fellow students. They may also record their thought processes in an interactive notebook (Lent, 2012; Marcarelli, 2010). Partner reading, where two students read together, is one

more technique that may be used by students to model their reading practices and make their thinking visible, emergent, and exploratory.

The main character of the book, which is told in first person, documents what he learns and thinks in a journal extending on his more than 400 previously composed journal entries documenting his life. Journal writing is an experience often met with mixed emotions. However, the main character writes with great enthusiasm. Using journals as a tool to document learning and thinking in inquiry-based learning is a practice students may embrace after reading this book. When used appropriately, journal writing like this is consistent with CCSS in that students should be able to "write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, p. 41). By writing with this premise in mind, students will stretch to interpreting and analyzing the ideas they are studying. Making journal writing part of the instructional routine is consistent with the CCSS in that students should "write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, p. 41). Writing can take many forms; this is one recommendation among many of how to integrate writing into the curriculum.

The beauty of this book lies below the surface. The book, told in a format that is creative and innovative, integrates factual information in a unique fashion, and encourages teachers to incorporate writing into their instructional practices. However, it also shows how these African American individuals overcame significant struggles to become successful and resilient. Because middle level students are developing their own identities, they can connect with the individuals in the book as role models who overcame various struggles to achieve what may have seemed impossible. This helps educators to engage their students in respectful conversations about diverse populations and their ability to aspire to greater things and achieve their dreams.

One book that connects nicely with *What Color is My World? The Lost History of African-American Inventors is The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (Kamkwamba, Mealer, & Zunon, 2012). This book could be used as a cornerstone book to introduce the concept of inventions using common, everyday materials. In this nonfiction picture book, 14-year-old William Kamkwamba uses junkyard scraps to build a functioning windmill. His creation brought electricity to his Malawi village that had been hit by drought and saved the crops of those in the village. He became known as the local hero who harnessed the wind. This lyrical story introduces the concept of creating with everyday materials and has the potential of integrating science, social studies, math, and language arts instruction.

This lyrical story may introduce the concept of creating with everyday materials and has the potential of instruction integrating science, social studies, math, and language arts.

Another favorite picture book to address the CCSS is *Abe Lincoln's Dream* (Smith, 2012). It is a stellar example of a picture book that may be used for interdisciplinary instruction because it holds the potential for both social studies and language arts instruction. According to Libresco, Balantic, and Kipling (2011), picture books provide young readers with visual images that make social studies concepts more concrete. This notion is beautifully illustrated in this picture book. The book begins by naming various dogs throughout time that would not enter a particular room in the White House because of fear of ghosts. The book centers on the conversation between Quincy, a young girl, and Abraham Lincoln's ghost. Various facts are interwoven through the text and reinforced with intriguing illustrations. Typical to Smith's works is the inclusion of humor. The book is delightful with many opportunities for extensions.

The CCSS communicate the importance of research in classrooms. Lincoln's ghost poses many questions throughout the book. These questions provide opportunities for students to conduct their own research. While specific and detailed answers are not provided in this book, they are present in a variety of other resources. Teachers may choose to have students find the answers to many of the ghost's questions while composing questions of their own, which serves as a crucial foundation for

writing. Researching the answers to these questions would give students the opportunity to employ research skills meaningfully, collaborate with others, and increase their reading of nonfiction text.

The CCSS state that students should "interpret words and phrases as they are used in text" as well as "determine the technical, figurative, and connotative meanings and analyze how specific word choices shape the meaning or tone" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 35). Lane Smith, the author of *Abe Lincoln's Dream*, is a master at communicating a distinguished tone characteristic of his writing. This book is laden with phrases and even jokes that will give students a variety of opportunities to interpret technical, figurative, and connotative meanings. These phrases and jokes truly add to the unique tone of the book. Teachers may choose to reinforce this tone or use this tone to teach voice by connecting *Abe Lincoln's Dream* with *John, Paul, George, and Ben* (2006) also written by Lane Smith.

Novels

Of course young adolescents enjoy reading about other youth (George & Stix, 2000). When students are given the opportunity to read novels in the classroom, they benefit from the instructional opportunities while also enjoying reading about others. Oftentimes, novels feature characters who are about the same age as student readers. This is one characteristic teachers may want to consider before choosing novels to share with their students. Teachers may also want to consider how their students will connect with the characters of the book. Will they find the characters and the plot relevant?

Novels are generally arranged into chapters and are often narrative in nature. This narrative quality does not take away from their instructional value. Actually, the opposite is true. Because novels are written in a variety of genres, the potential for their use as instructional tools is extensive. While reading historical fiction novels, students are able to live through the characters' lives in a vicarious experience. They are far more likely to connect with the identity and emotions of the individuals in novels than they would by trudging through a textbook. Historical fiction novels are not alone in the potential to provide opportunities for interdisciplinary instruction. Science fiction, realistic fiction, fantasy, and many other genres are also worthy contenders.

A favorite novel is *Between Shades of Gray* (Sepetys, 2011). It tells the story of Lithuanians persecuted under Stalin's rule. The story centers on Lina who is a 15-year-old girl with characteristics common to other 15-year-old adolescents. Her life and her world change when she is taken in the middle of the night by Soviet soldiers. She is taken along with her brother and mother by cattle car to Siberia and separated from her father. This harrowing account tells the story of the time she spent while under police arrest.

Figure 2 Novels

Title	CCSS	Instructional Strategies	Paired Texts
Between Shades of Gray (Septeys, 2011)	**CCSS.R.2** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. **CCSS.R.9** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches authors take.	Inquiry Circles	*The Boy Who Dared* (Bartoletti, 2008) *When My Name Was Keoko* (Park, 2002) *Weedflower* (Kadohata, 2006)
Wonder (Palacio, 2012)	**CCSS.R.6** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	Student writing	*because of Mr. Terupt* (Buyea, 2010) *Flipped* (Van Drannen, 2001)

This book is an excellent choice for many reasons. First, Lina is easy to connect to. Although she is sentenced to living in deplorable conditions and to manual labor, her story is also a love story. The question of her love being enough to help her survive is one that is central and one that adolescents can identify with. According to the CCSS, students need to analyze the development of central ideas and themes and summarize supporting details to support their conclusions. *Between Shades of Gray* provides opportunities for this type of analysis.

Books written about this time period are often based on the Holocaust and focus on Jewish people. However, there were many more groups of people affected during this time period. As shared previously, the CCSS state that students need to "analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 35). This book could serve as a starting point for an exploration on other groups of people who were affected and how they were the same and different from the Lithuanians. Exploring actions during the time of the Holocaust and the bombing of Pearl Harbor or making connections to current war-torn regions may help to engage students in understanding that historical moments have resounding relevance in the present.

The Boy Who Dared (Bartoletti, 2008) connects readily to *Between Shades of Gray*. It is the story of Helmuth Hubener who is imprisoned for treason after creating and distributing leaflets communicating the truth about Hitler and his actions. Helmuth learns this information by illegally listening to the BBC news on a shortwave radio and shares the information with his friends. All three boys are imprisoned and put on trial.

This book could be one of several used when creating literature circles to analyze how multiple texts address similar themes while also building knowledge. Wood, Pilonieta, and Blanton (2009) recommend using literature circles to teach and reinforce students' understanding on literacy skills and tasks. A literature circle format could be used for students to learn about themes through multiple texts. Traditionally, each literature circle group would read a different book focusing on the treatment of individuals during the time period of World War II. An alternative may be to implement inquiry circles (Daniels & Harvey, 2009) to acknowledge what we know about the research process, thinking, and collaboration to create a structure that supports students in building knowledge. The inquiry circle groups might consist of groups of four and have each group member read one of the following: *Between Shades of Gray* (Sepetys, 2011), *The Boy Who Dared* (Bartoletti, 2008), *When My Name Was Keoko* (Park, 2002), and *Weedflower* (Kadohata, 2006), where individuals who are Lithuanian, German, Korean, and Japanese-American would be represented. Students can deconstruct their individual novel and bring their analyses to their group meeting. Together, the group can create a Category Map to represent the common themes found in each of the books. They could also extend their learning by researching others affected by the leaders of this time period as well as the underlying and stated reasons for the actions taken. Students may take their newly learned knowledge to create a video highlighting the themes discovered and the knowledge learned.

Another favorite novel is *Wonder* (Palacio, 2012). It is an exquisite novel about a young boy born with an extreme facial deformity. Until his fifth grade year, Auggie Pullman did not attend school because of all of the surgeries he had. His challenge in beginning school at Beecher Prep is to convince the students he is really just like them even if he does have an extraordinary face. The book tells a story of fear, tenacity, friendship, and kindness.

According to the CCSS, students need to assess point of view and how point of view shapes the content and style of the text. Because this book is told in the varying points of view of the characters, students are able to see how many of the characters feel and act toward Auggie. The story is told from the point of view of Auggie, his classmates, his sister, and her boyfriend; the book can serve as a foundation for many talking points. It brings the individual identity and adolescent perceptions to the forefront.

This book illustrates the concept of point of view in a manner that is real and relevant to readers. Students could extend this notion by writing their own point of view accounts on a variety of topics that have differing importance in all subject areas. Since writers need options for writing, and options open windows for interest in writing, teachers can invite students to choose from a variety of short passages and write a short story from another point of view. Other examples of realistic fiction using varying points of view may also be shared and analyzed in the classroom as mentor texts. *Because of Mr. Terupt* (Buyea, 2010) and *Flipped* (Van Drannen, 2001) are just a few among many that may be considered.

Figure 3 Nonfiction

Title	CCSS	Instructional Strategies	Paired Texts
National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry (Lewis, 2012)	**CCSS.W.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.	Informational-based Poem Composition & Digital Publication	*Water Sings Blue* (Coombs, 2012)
Georgia in Hawaii (Novesky, 2012)	**CCSS.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 wupport conclusions drawn from the text.	One Word	*Through Georgia's Eyes* (Rodriguez, 2006) *My Name is Georgia* (Winter, 2003)

Nonfiction

Nonfiction can be a catalyst for learning and curiosity (Johnson & Small, 2008). The term nonfiction is often used interchangeably with the terms *informational text, nonnarative text,* and *nonfiction trade books.* Rather than being sold by textbook publishers, these factual books are sold in book format by booksellers (Atkinson, et al., 2009). While nonfiction text includes biographies, it also includes procedural text as well as other true stories (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). Appealing to all ages, this genre has made great gains in quality and choice throughout the years.

National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry: 200 Poems with Photographs That Squeak, Soar, and Roar (Lewis, 2012) is a favorite nonfiction piece of literature. It is an amazing book that is sure to capture the interest of many. One of the subjects that students love to read about most is animals. This book is filled with poems written by authors who are well-known as well as new authors, too. The poems are filled with interesting facts and accompanied by real-life photographs.

Students can creatively represent their ideas and knowledge in the content areas in ways other than traditional written and spoken responses (Ciecierski & Bintz, 2012). This book is a good example and may be one to be considered by the teacher to show how a book may be used as a mentor text (Dorfman & Capelli, 2007; Fletcher, 2011; Gallagher, 2011). The goal is for students to refer to an exemplary text to improve themselves as writers, which may be accomplished while students craft their own poems integrating content area material. While there are many other mentor texts teachers may make available to their students as mentor texts, another book in particular that may be considered in conjunction is *Water Sings Blue* (Coombs, 2012). While the format of this book differs from *National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry: 200 Poems with Photographs That Squeak, Soar, and Roar,* it is a wonderful example of integrating facts in a poetic way. Ciecierski and Bintz (2012) provide examples of rhymes connecting to social studies, science, math, and language arts. These examples illustrate the potential of having students craft rhyming text to demonstrate their knowledge in the content areas. The CCSS share the importance of using technology to produce and publish writing. Digitally enhancing and publishing students' creations may be particularly fitting to meet this standard. Furthermore, students may be given the opportunity to collaborate and interact with other students by presenting their finished poems electronically.

One last favorite is *Georgia in Hawaii: When Georgia O'Keefe Painted What She Pleased* (Novesky, 2012). It is a beautifully illustrated book about Georgia O'Keefe and her initial trip to Hawaii. According to the CCSS (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), students should be able to "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" (p. 35). This book provides great opportunities to make inferences

using both the illustrations and the text. Both invite readers to explore the type of person Georgia O'Keefe was. They may approach this exploration by reading other books about O'Keefe such as *Through Georgia's Eyes* (Rodriguez, 2006) or *My Name is Georgia: A Portrait by Jeanette Winter* (Winter, 2003).

One way students may use their inferences is to participate in a *One Word* learning experience. While students read the story, they should decide on *one word* to describe O'Keefe. This word may change as students read. While reading, they should pay particular attention to the illustrations as they truly have a symbiotic relationship with the text and add meaning to what is written. Once students have chosen their *one word*, they should write it on the front of an index card. On the back of the index card, they should cite textual evidence to support the conclusions they have drawn from the text. They should do this quietly and on their own because it is a secret! Next, the teacher will pair students up. The first person will share her/his word with her/his partner. The partner then has the job to consult the text to provide evidence for why the person may have chosen this word. After the partner has guessed reasons that support this one word, the first person will share her/his actual reasons for choosing the word. The roles are reversed and repeated.

This type of learning experience directly links to the requirements outlined in the CCSS because it engages students in citing evidence to support their response. Students often have a difficult time with the concept of identifying character traits. This learning experience provides the guided support students sometimes need to not only identify character traits but also document the reasons for their choices. It gives students the opportunity to cite evidence from the text and practice making inferences, which can also be a challenge. In addition, students are preparing and participating in conversation and collaboration as they build on each other's ideas while presenting their thinking clearly and persuasively. This practice gives teachers and students opportunities to address speaking and listening anchor standards.

Final thoughts

Authentic literature provides learners with opportunities to grapple with high quality pieces of literature including picture books, novels, and nonfiction texts. These opportunities do more than just provide enjoyment and information. Authentic literature helps create passion for reading. According to Kittle (2013), "passions are peculiar, but passions drive readers to devour books" (p. 19). We hope this article will help teachers and students create new passions for authentic literature because when students have passion to read, they have passion to learn.

With this said, we recognize that increasing students' interests and engagement is not easy; it requires teachers to step forward with bravery as they utilize authentic literatures as an instructional tool that encourages students to learn in ways that are creative and innovative. This is unique because it invites educators to stretch beyond the use of traditional literature, which is more commonly used for instruction. It also invites teachers to consider that this type of instruction may create tension. However, in this instance, tension is a good thing. Short and Burke share that tension is not uncommon in learning because knowledge is tentative (1991). This tension in learning is what keeps us "alert, monitoring possibilities, taking new risks, stretching ourselves and our capabilities" (p. 28). These practices and ways of thinking are a transition from learning only for today to learning for today and for tomorrow.

Gallagher (2009) advises us to "never lose sight that our highest priority is to raise students who become lifelong readers. What our students read in school is important; what they read the rest of their lives is more important" (p. 117). Creating lifelong readers and learners should be our greatest mission. When teachers use authentic literature to teach the Common Core State Standards, they are a step closer to accomplishing this goal.

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