Defining History of the English Language Teacher

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I have been teaching for nine years. I taught three years of seventh grade Language Arts and Social Studies. For the last six, I have taught eighth grade Language Arts. Last year I was asked to write an educational philosophy. Here is an excerpt of that philosophy:

Eight years ago, as I entered my own classroom, I never imagined the complexity of the job. Among many of my roles, I am a role model, a public servant, and a coach. I aim to ensure that my student’s most basic needs are met, while also encouraging students to reach as high as they can for their most ambitious potential. I am a teacher that serves to better tomorrow’s society by addressing the immediate needs of my students today. I serve the public by educating society’s future citizens, and I serve my students by respecting their individualism and preparing them with skills they will need in a global 21st century workforce. The greatest reward to teaching are the days when a child thanks me, are the days when I help a child get food, are the days when a child says, “I finally get it”, are the days when I simply help a child smile and feel good about themselves.

Writing a philosophy of education is a daunting task, and my philosophy was written, at the time, on the basis of servitude because servitude was all I knew to write about. Community servant was all that I had come to figure out about my role as teacher. All the rest – classroom manager, tutor, reading assistant, editor, and most importantly instructor – I had no opinion of because I had no grounded idea of how to define each of the roles. I realize now, in reflection, that my philosophy was grounded in the frills of “public servant” because I have no foundation of instructional theory upon which to base a philosophical statement.

In retrospect, my philosophy is not much different from the philosophy I wrote when I was an English major seeking secondary teaching certification within my undergraduate years at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina. And here in lies the concern – I have the same philosophy of teaching now as I did before I knew what teaching was really all about. Does this mean I have not grown? Does this mean that I have not yet mastered my profession? I also begin to wonder why my philosophy embodies so much about servitude and represents so little of what I actually do – instruct. I realize now that my philosophy of education is void of any opinions towards reading instruction, writing instruction, and language instruction. In fact, this void soon becomes a very evident gap for me as I currently take on a new role in my school.

My “servant role” grew last year when I was asked to serve as my school’s Language Arts Department chair. In my first year, I simply assigned myself one task – repair the image of the department. We had been a school absent from county meetings for at least a year, maybe two. We had been a department that had become frustrated with the lack of information and organization. My first year’s job as department chair was simple, and it built upon my safely worded philosophy of education. I saw my role in this leadership position as nothing more but serving the school and serving my department. Then at the start of this year I was asked to work with my school’s Instructional Resource Teacher (IRT) to develop a school wide tiered reading intervention program (a program developed around the principals of Response to Intervention, RTI). All of a sudden I found myself having to define *literacy*  to an entire school staff, present to the staff the idea of metacognition, to provide training to the staff on reciprocal teaching, and most dauntingly explain to the staff what makes *good* “literacy instruction”. All I had in my repertoire of instructional and literacy knowledge were my years of undergraduate training, my nine years of experience, an innate ability to know good instruction, and four graduate level classes focused on literacy instruction. It is at this very moment in my career, being asked to write a teaching philosophy and being asked to lead the staff through literacy training, that I realized my need for a philosophical reform. Here I am standing in front of colleagues and I have no foundational knowledge of theory to back up my claims of metacognitive approaches to literacy instruction. I am also being asked to advocate for major change and major reform within my school environment by encouraging teachers of all contents to see themselves as both writing teachers and reading teachers. As Louise M. Rosenblatt (1976) writes in her preface to the third edition of Literature as Exploration, I quickly find that my voice is “a minority voice”. Here I am – parallel to Rosenblatt – being listened to, involving myself in “so many of the important educational developments.” However, unlike Rosenblatt, I am alien to the theories supporting my cause. Even more alarming, I have come to realize that I have no foundational understanding of all the good teaching strategies I have been *trained* to use. Why is metacognition important? Why are approaches grounded in metacognitive theory successful? Why do I use literature circles? Why do I feel it necessary to teach *that one particular text*? Why for nine years have I taught the way I have taught? I realize that I no longer can rely on instinct and the innate sense of knowing what constitutes good instruction to answer these many valid questions. I realize that my philosophy – grounded in the safety net of social servant – is weak and incomplete. More alarmingly, I realized that as an English Language Arts teacher, I do not know my own history.

Michael W. Smith in his forward for Jeffrey D. Wilhelm’s You Gotta BE the Book

(1995) notes Applebee (1992): “In our case studies of programs with reputations for excellence, we also asked teachers directly about their familiarity with recent developments in literary theory. Some 72 percent of these teachers reported little or no familiarity with contemporary literary theory.” I find validation in Smith’s quoting of Applebee because I realize that I am not alone in my *unknowing*. As Smith continues to explain the validity and wealth of Wilhelm’s book, he comments on Wilhelm’s ability to bridge the gap between research and practice. It is with this paper that I hope to do the same, but for my own needs.

 In a video podcast by Scholastic to promote her book The Reading Zone, Nancie Atwell (2011) explains that the most important professional development for any teacher is to seek out the wealth of pedagogical knowledge published by other educators and researchers. Atwell states:

My sort of pedagogical money in the bank is the knowledge I’ve [gained] over the years. Obviously some of that is from my own experience of working with kids. But also some of it is knowledge I’ve acquired through reading other educators’ theories, and research, and methodology…there is such a huge body of professional knowledge right now about writing and reading workshops…that teachers don’t have to work based on intuition any longer or tradition or ritual. There is a body of knowledge we can point to and say ‘These books are helpful, these books will open windows and doors in our minds, these books show what else is possible.’…To take advantage of the incredible library right now of resources that are available to teachers and gain knowledge by reading and watching, looking at those videos, getting a sense of what else it could look like other than that image that we carry around with us from thirteen years (referring to her years of teaching experience) we set behind a desk and essentially did what we were told.

Atwell continues to explain that the best professional development I could have as a teacher is to -- in this order – read; observe; and focus on my individual kids. I have accomplished the observation and focus parts; I have not accomplished the reading. I need to begin to understand the wealth of education’s theories, research, and knowledge. In fact, as I have continued into my graduate course work, I have come to understand that there are names, theories, and practices that I should have as my foundation. And I have the impression that many of these names, theories, and practices should be ones in which I know, breathe, and practice. James R. Squire (1985) writes in “The Ten Great Ideas in the Teaching of English During the Past Half Century” that it is his attempt to place in perspective the varied contributions to education and to remind us of how our future is mortgaged by our own history as educators. I find refuge in his statement, because -- once again -- it is my attempt to briefly do the same here.

I find that I am not alone in my efforts to be a good teacher without knowing the science, research, or theories behind good teaching. Wilhelm (1995) writes in You Gotta BE the Book, “Throughout my own first years as a teacher, I suffered from what I might now call a sort of theoretical schizophrenia.” He continues by writing that every teacher should be preoccupied with how we [teachers] come to endow experience with meaning, and in return, our students, our readers, will find meaning in their reading experiences. Even James Britton (1986) admits to the need for teachers to apply fuller understanding of the history of the profession.

 At the same time, I know that it is by no means possible to conduct a comprehensive review of the history of educational theory within this single paper. This is the same realization that Phil Cormack came to in his newly published “Reading Pedagogy, ‘Evidence’ and education policy: learning from history?” (2011). Nevertheless, Cormack offers insightful moments of our history as English Language teachers that are worth understanding and knowing. He begins, as I feel I should, with two “influential interventions” that were made popular in the early nineteenth century due to the challenges presented by the industrial revolution: Lancaster in England and Stow in Scotland.

Lancaster lived at a time when Britain was coming to terms with the impact of the industrial revolution. He realized that he was living in a “new” society made largely of a population of middle-class, working-class people in “squalid conditions” (Cormack, 2011). These “swollen cities” with a significant number of poor, required schooling to become more efficient. Therefore Lancaster invented the monitorial system of education. Within this system, one “master” could select monitors among “the best of his pupils and appoint them to drill their fellow students in a strictly regulated fashion – *an approach labelled* *mutual instruction*” (Cormack, 2011). The task of the master was to test and evaluate where the students should be placed and when they should be promoted from one class to the next. The monitorial system cannot hide the fact that it was largely modeled on the factories driving the “efficiencies of production” at the time (Cormack, 2011). Nevertheless, the model Lancaster created for systematizing education soon proved unsuccessful and by the 1830s the monitorial system fell out of favor as an ideal for education, especially educating the poor: “A major criticism was that what was learned in the reading lesson was never actually understood and that the little knowledge gained could be seen as dangerous because it was not accompanied by moral guidance in the use of that knowledge” (Cormack, 2011).

In response to the Lancaster failed monitor system, Stow from Scotland would create a model of education built around a teacher-pupil relationship. Again, Stow’s concern was the mass education of a growing working-class. Stow’s intervention was the idea of “simultaneous instruction,” a form of education that evolved into the lecture style teaching we are familiar to seeing in today’s universities. By placing the well-trained schoolmaster front and center, Stow’s simultaneous instruction method allowed for content in school lessons to be monitored and it allowed for the child to be guided with “proper superintendence”. Thus, Lancaster’s issue of the moral gap was solved. Cormack points out that Stow’s school model is easily folded into the English lesson via a reading program. In fact, Cormack explains that Stow’s program, based on the monitoring of Christian and moralistic literature, would later lay the ground work for nationalism and imperialism of the twentieth century.

What makes Lancaster and Stow’s history relevant to my teaching is that they developed their methods of interventions in relation to one target group – “the burgeoning poor of fast growing industrial cities” (Cormack, 2011). The notion of the poor driving the need for education reform is very relevant in today’s educational talks. Furthermore, because it is the poor that we are *still* leaving helpless within the school system’s methods, especially in teaching reading, it is the same group that is targeted by today’s education interventionist. In fact Rosenblatt points out in her book Literature as Exploration (1976) that there is in fact a social and personal nature to literature itself. Literature is concerned with the social and the cultural, especially within a democracy, and therefore can be a vehicle used to give voice to a class of people otherwise muted by society. Wilhelm builds upon this idea in You Gotta BE the Book (1995):

…if schools serve a greater function, to help create empowered and attentive citizens who can both pursue fulfilling and fruitful individual lives and who can contribute in transformative ways to the life of a democracy, then literature must take a central place in the curriculum.

 More importantly, our society measures a child’s progress primarily in reading ability. Reading therefore comprises not only the main focus of educational research, but the very foundation of the school curriculum (Fischer, 2003).

Reading up on Lancaster and Stow also made me realize what Squire (1985) points out in his review of literary history: literature in English has been a school subject, a “discipline” for only one hundred years. Furthermore, the so called “standards works” in curriculum were standard only the first 25 years of the twentieth century, yet drives so much of our discussion within the field of English Language Arts education. In the 1930s one would find “great works on the critical methods” and a rise within the movement of guided individual reading. It would be the oversimplified social approach of the 1930s that Rosenblatt would later reject along with New Criticism. By the 1940s and 1950s F.R. Leavis and G. Robert Carlsen of England and Dwight Burton of the United States would re-examine the traditional literary cannon. A few years later at the Dartmouth Seminar, Leavis along with Brooks & Warren, Frank Kermode, and Northrop Frye would allow the literary method (or literary criticism) to become the center of instruction for this new re-examined traditional literary cannon (Squire, 1985).

Moving to the United States in the 1970s, the U.S. would find itself in an arms race and therefore strive to improve the American educational experience through the transformation and reinvention of the reading method. As a result of the Dartmouth Seminar, New Criticism would come into play and dominate many colleges’ and universities’ English departments (Rosenblatt, 1976). As a result of its popularity, New Criticism would trickle its way down into the secondary, middle, and elementary school rooms and remain the central mode of reading instruction for years to come (Squire, 1985; Rosenblatt, 1976). According to Charles E. Bressler in Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice (1999) New Criticism becomes one of the most critical movements within the twentieth century. New Critics, “wish to break from the past and seemingly disavow the cultural influences on a work of literature. The text, these critics declare, will interpret the text.”

By examining the history of New Criticism, I came to an understanding of two axioms. One, “By becoming acquainted with the various schools of criticism, we can begin to examine our own theory of interpretation and to articulate our own principles of criticism” (Bressler,1999). Two, that Literary Criticism, when applied judiciously, is seen as a forum for improving a reader’s analytical skills and therefore leads to a deepened understanding, perception, and experience with the literature (Squire, 1985). New Criticism was essentially reacting against the predominance of literary history and the influence of reading a text solely as a reflection of history. As she rejected the social approach of reading literature founded within the 1930s, Rosenblatt (1976) accepts the fact that New Critics had a solid foundation in the claim that too much emphasis was being placed on a text’s historical significance. She agrees that literature has been overcome and shadowed by the oversimplified historical approach. However, unlike the New Critics, Rosenblatt recognizes that the social aspect of literature cannot be ignored in its entirety. The point is to not let the social aspect of literature nor the historical read nor the simplified text rendering overtake the actual literary experience.

Rosenblatt explains that because New Criticism was overtly intellectualized, pseudo-scientific, and analytic, a strong reaction against the movement occurred in the late 1960s. The movement actually led teaching to the other extreme – and teachers became “especially receptive to the sensuous and emotional aspects of the literary experience” by demanding works to be “relevant” to the reader, contemporary world, and the psychological needs of its reader. Rosenblatt continues her historical review by explaining that at the height of the 1960s, elementary and secondary schools “maintained a lively interest in the personal nature of reading and the growing preoccupation with the quest for individual identity” (1976). As a result, by 1976 when Rosenblatt published her book, there were two contradictory forces within education:

On the one hand – a legacy from the social and moral upheavals of the last decade – some are calling for the nurturing of greater spiritual and artistic strengths and personal creativity. The efforts to take over such British methods as open classroom and creative dramatics reflect this trend. On the other hand, the economic recession has fostered in some quarter narrowly utilitarian demands for eliminating “frills” such as the arts, and concentrating on the “basic skills.”

Rosenblatt explains that she found herself as a “voice warning against all such extremist pendulum swings.” She spent years attacking New Critics, only to realize a need to seek a redress of balance: “I say a lot about the impact of the reader’s personality and experience on what is made out of text. But I do not reject responsibility to the text” (1976). She continues by allowing New Critics to take ownership of their contribution in rescuing literature from becoming a solely historical or biographical experience. However she rejects their view that a text (a poem) is a closed system apart from the author and the reader. Here is where Rosenblatt explains the Literacy Experience as being paramount to the teaching of literature. In her *Coda: A Performing Art* she writes, “Here, then, is another important implication of the emphasis on the essentially personal character of literary experience: It forces us to recognize that in the classroom, if we are to keep literature alive, we cannot completely separate the technical, the esthetic, from the human meaning of the work.” Wilhelm does a fine job refining Rosenblatt’s point of the aesthetic:

As part of her argument she [Rosenblatt] makes an interesting move away from the view that “reading is reading” by drawing a distinction between “efferent” and “aesthetic” reading. Efferent reading is pursued when readers adopt a stance in which they are concerned with what information they can “take away” from the reading. The text is treated as consisting of information. The aesthetic stance, however, is maintained for the purpose of “living through” an experience that is enjoyed while reading. Texts themselves are not intrinsically literary or nonliterary; the stand taken toward a text is what makes the reading aesthetic or efferent (1997).

Essentially, Rosenblatt’s Literary Experience is a response to the pit falls of New Criticism. Rosenblatt explains, “No one else can read a literary work for us. The benefits of literature can emerge only from the creative activity on the part of the reader himself…The verbal symbols enable him to draw on his past experiences with what the words point to in life and literature” (1976). In *A Performing Art*, Rosenblatt furthers this point through a profound survey of the literary cannon:

Imaginative literature is indeed something “burned through,” lived through, by the reader. We do not learn *about* Lear, we share, we participate in, Lear’s stormy induction into wisdom. In *Huckleberry Finn*, we do not learn about conditions in the pre-Civil War South; we live in them, we see them through the eyes and personality of Huck. Even while we chuckle at his adventures and his idioms, we grow into awareness of the moral dimensions appropriate for viewing the world. Whether it be a lighthearted lyric of Herrick’s or a swiftly paced intellectual comedy of Shaw’s or a brooding narrative of Hardy’s, a reading is of necessity a participation, a personal experience.

In other words because readers have diverse preoccupations and diverse interest, what they make of a work will vary within different situations and vary within different parts of a reader’s life. In the end, “the experience of literature, far from being for the reader a passive process of absorption, is a form of intense personal activity” (Rosenblatt, 1976). Britton essentially agrees with Rosenblatt in *Talking to Learn*, (1986) by stating, “Learners must bring with them whatever they already know and believe and attempt to re-invent that in the light of the evidence offered. Interpreting the new and reinterpreting the familiar are the two faces of one coin.” Britton fine tunes the underlying notion Rosenblatt creates within her definition of Literary Experience, by implying that a large amount of “the experience” relies heavily on the readers background, knowledge, and personal experience. Squire furthers Britton’s point in his *Ten Great Ideas in the Teaching of English During the Past Half Century* (1985) when he confirms that Rosenblatt’s Literary Experience does imply that what the reader brings into the text will largely determine their take away. Squire continues by pointing out how Rosenblatt’s definition of Literary Experience became the ground work for the understanding that prior experience is important for cognitive development of the reader. Squire’s 1980s would give birth to the “schema theory” in which David Pearson asserts that prior experience is the most critical factor in determining what is understood in reading (Squire, 1985).

 A continued discussion on the Literary Experience would lead me to Applebee and the notion of scaffold instruction, Atwell’s insistence on student choice as the vehicle into the “Reading Zone”, to Fischer’s point that our experience with literature can be skewed by social and personal experiences, and finally to Cormack’s point that the Literacy Experience is shaped by how one is taught and how one learns. From the discussion of Rosenblatt groundbreaking Literary Experience I would ascertain the need to explore the same scholars and their ideas of what the teaching of reading looks like and how students actually complete the action of “learn.” I must also take time to acknowledge that my focus thus far has primarily been on reading instruction. My focus on the instruction of reading is in no way indicative of my attitude towards writing or language instruction. I simply decided to focus on reading instruction for the purposes I have been summoned to fulfill within my school.

I am slowly starting to come to an understanding of the thinkers and doers that laid the brick work of the school building in which I work. Nevertheless, further exploration into an understanding of why I teach the way I do, and why I agree that my teaching is grounded is required. I have in no means exhausted that need in this start of what has turned out to be a lengthy research process. This is what I believe Wilhelm means in calling for “teacher-researcher” (1985). The task I have started here is one that I should continue in my graduate studies. Cormack also makes a valid point when he quotes Freebody (1990) in that historical insights allow educators to keep one eye steadily on the research and one on the practitioner. And finally, Britton concludes that if I was to remain narrow in my professional understanding and view of instruction and the history of my profession, that I would become a detriment to my own profession (1986). In the end, as Langer and Applebee (1986) explain, I approach what I teach and how I teach based on the varying experiences I have as an instructor. Some experience may be more significant, reflecting, or perhaps even foster different modes of thinking and reasoning. If I am to continue to foster reform and reform that is not an imposition of, as Rosenblatt states, “fiat,” or reform that does not lead to my “doom,” then I must do so with an active understanding of the teaching profession (1976).

Defining the History Behind the English Language Teacher

An Annotated Bibliography

Bressler, C. E. (1999). To the reader, defining criticism theory and literature, new criticism, reader-response criticism. *Literary criticism an introduction to theory and practice.*

(pp. x-67). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

As an instructor in English Literature, one realizes the invaluable history and background Bressler presents within the pages of *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. To understand modern instructional theories, one first has to come to grips with the history behind literary theory. Bressler’s book is the best book out there for such purposes.

Britton, J., Barnes, D., & Torbe, M. (1986). Part two: Talking to learn. *Language, the learner, and the school* (3rd ed.). (pp. 91-130). England: Penguin Books.

 Laying out the validation behind the need to talk and the evolving theory of cooperative learning, Britton’s chapter in *Language, the Learner, and the School*, becomes a “must cited” for any researcher that is trying to figure out the *how* in learning. Britton pairs transcripts of student discussions with insightful commentary in order to make astonishing, conclusive statements about the reader’s/ learner’s need to engage in talk. Such statements inevitably become the foundation to future metacognitive approaches in the teaching and the monitoring of student reading (i.e. reciprocal teaching and literature circles).

Cormack, P. (2011). Reading pedagogy, "evidence" and education policy: Learning from history? *Australian Educational Researcher*, *38*(2), 133-148. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/10.1007/s13384-011-0020-1

 *Reading pedagogy, “Evidence” and education policy: learning from history?* is an academic paper in which Phil Cormack responds to the Australian Government’s “National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy” (Department of Education, Science & Training (DEST) 2005). In the paper Cormack provides a “genealogical examination of the connections between policy and reading.” (Cormack 2011). He summarizes two popular schooling methods that were started during the industrial revolution in Europe. He explains how these two methodologies will shape the instruction of reading within our current century. Furthermore, he elaborates on the ELA profession’s need to have a historical understanding of the pedagogical issues/trends and learning issues/trends that drive today’s educational reform movements. Are educators learning from their own history and are they avoiding a vicious cyclical approach to educational reform?

Fischer, S. R. (2003). Reading the future. *A history of reading* (pp. 324-344). London: Reaktion Books.

 A descriptive and thick read on the history of reading, the ending proves valuable in understanding the current trends of reading instruction and proves value in the fact that Rosenblatt’s idea of the Literary Experience is still held in high regards with today’s most modern theorist. Fischer’s overall message is that readers bring experiences into the text that in turn shape the meaning they gain from the reading experiences itself. Fischer also does a fine job exploring the social and culture role of the reader experience.

Langer, J. A., & Applebee, A. N. (1986). Reading and writing instruction: Toward a theory of teaching and learning. *Review of Research in Education*, *13*, 171-194. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/stable/1167222

 A very insightful piece into the historical ground work of reading and writing instruction, the paper’s aim is to provide “an exhaustive review of previous research” in order to support the conclusion that good instruction embodies scaffold instruction. Of particular interest is Langers and Applebee’s review/introduction to various founding “fathers” of instructional theorist such as Luria and Vygotsky.

Latendresse, C. (2004). Literature circles: Meeting reading standards, making personal connections, and appreciating other interpretations. *National Middle School Association: Middle School Journal*, *35*(3), 13-20.

Relying heavily on Appleman’s and Daniels’s works, Latendresse thoroughly explores in his article, *Literature circles: Meeting Reading Standards, Making Personal Connections, and Appreciating Other Interpretations, Middle School Journal* (2004), the various avenues of the metacognitive reading process. At times idealistic and yet surprisingly motivating, Latendresse’s article encourages alternative approaches for two forms of metacognitive learning: the reciprocal teaching process and literature circles. For teachers that have been handed a literature circle packet and told, “This is what good teaching looks like,” Latendresse’s article proves to be grounding and informative. His ideas are based upon strong reputable resources, renowned in the arena of reading instruction (i.e. Daniels, Rosenblatt, Atwell, Soter). Furthermore, Latendresse elaborates on innovative, rigorous approaches and examples of teaching reading in the middle school classroom. With much appreciation, his central message is reinforced throughout the article: middle school reading instruction needs to move beyond the reader-response approach.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1976). *Literature as exploration* (pp. v-xiv, 224-225, 277-291). New York, NY: Noble and Noble.

 Written in 1976, a surprisingly modern portrait of *today’s* issue and trends in reading instruction. This thirty-five year old read proves to be modern, forward thinking, and reflective of Ronsenblatt’s prophetic intelligences into the world of reading and writing instruction. An accurate look into the issues of literature, instructor, and the role of the relationship between instructor and student, *Literature as Exploration* has moments that read as if today’s politics were driving Rosenblatt’s thought processes and theory. Rosenblatt’s wisdom proves iconic.

Scholastic Incorporated (Producer). (2011). *Nancie Atwell discusses her book “The Reading Zone”.* *Professional Author TalkAbouts*. Podcast retrieve from: http://

teacher.scholastic.com/products/scholasticprofessional/authors/talkabouts.htm#atwell

In a video podcast, Atwell shares intimate experiences with the viewer about the act of teaching and role of teacher. She addresses specific topics such as student motivation in reading and writing, advice for new teachers in reading and writing instruction, and an opinion on the reading and writing professional development that all teachers should experience.

Squire, J. R. (1985). The ten great ideas in the teaching of english during the past half century. *Teacher as learner* (pp. 9-18). Alberta, Canada: The University Of Calgary.

An invaluable chapter to read from *Teacher as Learner*, “The Ten Great Ideas in the Teaching of English During the Past Half Century” by James R. Squire is *the* foundational reading all teachers of the ELA profession *must* engage, meditate, explore, practice, and discuss. Squire gives a thorough examination of the trends within ELA education, citing the *most important* scholars, thinkers, and creators of the ideas and theories within the ELA profession. This is an article for any teacher that simply wants to understand the birth of current perspectives and practices within ELA pedagogy.

----------------. (1988). Critical issues in writing and reading today. *Ways of knowing: Research*

*and practice in the teaching of writing* (pp. 83-93). Iowa Council of Teachers of English.

 Though written for the purpose of writing instruction, Squire’s chapter proves the basic

fundamental principles that encompass good instruction within the English Language

Arts classroom. He reflects on statistics, the need to educate students to become thinkers,

and the importance of literacy instruction across all subjects: Math, Science, History, and English Language Arts.

Strait, D. H. (1999). Foreword. *Literary criticism an introduction to theory and practice*

(pp. vii-ix). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

See annotation for C.E. Bressler.

Wilhelm, J. D. (1997). *You gotta be the book teaching engaged and reflective reading with*

*adolescents.* Columbia University: Teachers College.

Wilhelm book proves so engaging and rings so true to an experienced teacher that one

could read his masterpiece in just a sitting. Wilhelm offers historical insight,

validation, and creative ideas to the way reading instruction should take place. He also

shapes an understanding to the role of student and the role of teacher. In regards to

teachers, he reinforces and cautions the need for the profession to remain within the

realm of research while keeping in perspective the reality and demands of the reader in the modern classroom.