

A photograph of three young children of diverse backgrounds smiling at the camera. They are standing in front of a chain-link fence. The child on the left is a girl with dark hair, the middle child is a boy with curly hair, and the child on the right is a girl with dark hair. They are all wearing bright, colorful clothing.

INTERNATIONAL
LITERACY
ASSOCIATION

LITERACY TODAY

January/February 2018

Volume 35, Issue 4

What's Hot in Literacy 2018

- You weigh in on what really matters
- Impact of classroom design on literacy learning
- Normalizing classroom conversations about race and racism

Contents

LITERACY TODAY

Volume 35, Issue 4
January/February 2018

EDITORIAL STAFF

Managing Editor Colleen Patrice Clark
Editors Christina Lambert & Alina O'Donnell

ILA LEADERSHIP

Executive Director Marcie Craig Post
Associate Executive Director Stephen Sye

2017–2018 BOARD MEMBERS

Douglas Fisher, San Diego State University, President; Bernadette Dwyer, Dublin City University, Vice President; William Teale, University of Illinois at Chicago, Immediate Past President; Gwynne Ash, Texas State University; Catherine Collier, Chesapeake Public Schools; Beverley E. Harris, Mico University College, University of the West Indies; Rachel Karchmer-Klein, University of Delaware; Stephanie Laird, Southeast Polk Community School District; Susan Paasch, Sauk Rapids Public School District; Stephen Peters, Laurens County School District 55; Julia Reynolds, Allendale Public Schools; Jennifer Williams, Calliope Global Education Initiatives

ADVERTISING

For information, contact Megan Ferguson at 800.336.7323 x 417 or advertising@reading.org. Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement.

ABOUT US

Literacy Today is the bimonthly membership magazine of the International Literacy Association, a nonprofit that strives to empower educators, inspire students, and encourage teachers with the resources they need to make literacy accessible for all.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Literacy Today (ISSN 2411-7862, Print; 2411-7900, Online) is included in the cost of ILA membership. To join, visit literacyworldwide.org. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Literacy Today*, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA. CANADIAN GST: Registration number R-129785523. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40033039. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to PO Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON, L4B 4R6.

CONTACT US

CUSTOMER SERVICE
800.336.7323

customerservice@reading.org

EDITORIAL
800.336.7323 x 446
literacytoday@reading.org

Write to *Literacy Today*, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA.

MAILING LIST RENTALS

ILA rents mailing lists only to groups approved by the Association. Members can have their names removed from lists rented by writing to ILA Customer Service or e-mailing customerservice@reading.org.

© International Literacy Association



**What's Hot in
Literacy 2018**

3 EDITOR'S NOTE

4 LIT BITS

6 ILA UPDATE

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

8 ILA's Literacy Research Panel Redirects the Literacy Conversation

10 Launching the Read to Be Ready Coaching Network

12 Democratic Stewardship and the Digital Divide

14 Opening Doors for Incarcerated Students Through Literacy

16 Professional Learning Mechanisms for Stronger Disciplinary Literacy Instruction

18 MSQI Framework: Strong Leadership Meets Collaborative Culture

THE ENGAGING CLASSROOM

30 Fostering a Culture of Racial Justice Work

32 Modeling Metacognitive Process Using Think-Aloud

34 Renewing Hope With English Literacies

36 Designing Literacy-Rich Learning Spaces

38 Improving Students' Disciplinary Reading Motivation

40 Literature Circles 2.0: Book Clubs in the Digital Age

THE ILA NETWORK

44 Eliminating a Community Book Desert Through Greater Access to Books

GLOBAL IMPACT

46 Cultivating Home Languages in the Classroom

48 EVENTS

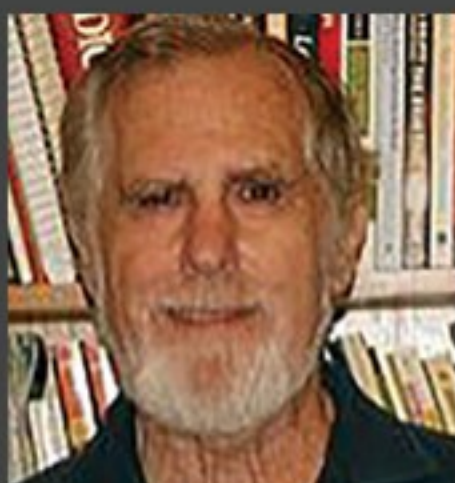
50 MEMBER SPOTLIGHT





Thomas DeVere Wolsey

(tdwolsey@msn.com), an ILA member since 1984, is an educational consultant who focuses on literacy and technology development at home and internationally.



Alan N. Crawford

(acr9944@gmail.com), an ILA member since 1962, is professor emeritus of Education at California State University, Los Angeles.



Frances Dixon

(guatvillage@gmail.com) is founder and president of Adopt-a-Village in Guatemala.



PRESERVING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

Cultivating home languages in the classroom

By **Thomas DeVere Wolsey, Alan N. Crawford, & Frances Dixon**

On a mountaintop surrounded by clouds and rainforest, students gather for classes. The students here all come from the surrounding villages, where Q'anjob'al, a Mayan language, is spoken.

The literacy rate of Guatemalans over the age of 15 is just 75%—making it the most illiterate country in Latin America. This rate is even lower among indigenous Guatemalans, who have limited opportunities to learn the national language of Spanish—a barrier to achieving higher levels of academic success, obtaining jobs, and escaping poverty.

Located in a remote region of northwestern Guatemala, the Maya Jaguar Center for Education is “opening doors to promising and productive futures” by teaching Mayan children (ages 12–18) how to read, write, and speak in Spanish.

Students come to the Maya Jaguar campus (comprising twin middle and high schools) to preserve their heritage, to learn Spanish, and to bring the best of the outside world back to their villages—many alumni go on to university, eventually returning home as nurses and teachers. Students even have been known to inflate their ages so they can attend; their desire to learn is that strong.

By cultivating a bilingual learning environment, the center is preparing students for long-term success while keeping Mayan language, culture, and tradition alive.

Recognizing and honoring endangered languages

If you have never heard of Q'anjob'al (also spelled Kanjobal), you are not alone. The Endangered Languages Project suggests that Q'anjob'al is a vulnerable language, meaning it is subject to extinction. When a language becomes extinct, so does the history, culture, and knowledge available in that language. Of the 7,000 or so languages in use in the world today, some 3,000 may be lost in the future. Q'anjob'al is one.

In the late 19th century, Native American children were frequently sent to government-run “assimilation” boarding schools. Richard Henry Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School, coined the motto “kill the Indian, and save the man,” about the efforts to “civilize” Native Americans, largely through education. Students were not only forced to learn English, but also were punished for speaking their own languages. They were also provided with vocational training and required to convert to Christianity. These schools have had a lasting negative impact on the well-being of indigenous languages and cultures.

Reversing the damage

Today, teachers at schools on Native American reservations are working to undo this damage. At Second Mesa Day School on the Hopi Reservation in Arizona, most students speak

When students bring their indigenous languages into the classrooms, they immediately enrich the learning community.

English and are knowledgeable of Hopi customs but cannot speak Hopi. Recently, the school hired a teacher to reignite the use of the Hopi language that could otherwise become extinct.

In Los Angeles, CA, and Urbana, IL, entire communities speak Q'anjob'al. Because the speakers of this language are from Guatemala and parts of Mexico adjacent to Guatemala, they are often mistaken for Spanish speakers. Students may also be wrongly assigned to bilingual education programs in Spanish. Such assumptions, although understandable, lead to further disintegration of the rich and diverse languages of the world.

All teachers can help to promote the maintenance and acquisition of endangered languages in their classrooms. Liz Mahon, professor of linguistically diverse education at the University of Colorado, Denver, suggests that teachers ask students to interview their parents in the home language.

For example, students might ask (in their home language) questions about electricity for a science lesson, such as “What did you learn about electricity in science class when you went to school?” and “What kind of science topics do you like learning about?” By asking students to interview a parent or other family member in their home language, students start to view their first language as a useful way to think about and engage with the world.

Another idea is to assign a writing prompt and ask students to respond in their first or home language in addition to the language of the school (e.g., English in the United States). This helps students to understand the

value of their home language while facilitating a deeper understanding of words' meanings. To create an inclusive learning environment, educators can call upon bilingual students to help them label common items in the classroom in the language of the school as well as their home language. Bilingual students will be encouraged to continue using their native language while introducing their classmates to new words.

Whether your students speak Hopi, or Q'anjob'al, or any of the more than 7,000 languages found on the planet today, your classroom should reflect *all* the students in it. When students bring their indigenous languages into the classrooms, they immediately enrich the learning community. By encouraging the use of first languages, teachers can enhance literacy development, foster cultural awareness, and prepare students to participate in an interdependent world. ■

RESOURCES ON ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

- Learn about Maya Jaguar and Adopt-a-Village in Guatemala at adoptavillage.com.
- Learn about endangered languages and find resources for teaching at endangeredlanguages.com.
- Learn more about Q'anjob'al at ethnologue.com/18/language/kjb/ and faculty.las.illinois.edu/rshosted/Qanjobal.html.