

Book Review/Recension d'ouvrage

Language and Literacy: Content and Teaching Strategies, 7th Canadian edition

By Gail E. Tompkins, Robin M. Bright, & Pamela J.T. Winsor
Toronto, Ontario: Pearson Canada, 2018, 446 pages
ISBN: 978-0-13-409589-9 (paperback)

Reviewed by / Revu par

Cort Casey
Christian Brothers University

In 2006, Jill A. Jones asked the question, “Are all teachers reading teachers?” In the decade plus since Jones proffered this question, an educational shift has occurred which has placed a greater emphasis on teaching literacy across the curriculum without regard to subject area or grade level. In essence, all teachers have become literacy teachers. Gail E. Tompkins, Robin M. Bright, and Pamela J.T. Winsor have crafted a text that tackles literacy from multiple viewpoints and that delves into a wide range of reading-based topics. Classroom teachers will find value in the specific teaching strategies offered and in the rich depth provided throughout.

The seventh Canadian edition of *Language and Literacy: Content and Teaching Strategies* has evolved in direct correlation to the evolution that has taken place within the field of literacy and teaching reading over the last decade. Two of the most important additions to this edition are the emphasis placed on working with English language learners

within the classroom and the increased emphasis on using technology more broadly as it relates to literacy. Previous editions provided strategies and helpful background information for working with English language learners, but the seventh edition offers updated information and more specific depth related to differentiating instruction for this population as well as a focus on meeting the needs of other diverse learner groups. Technology is addressed in a myriad of ways within the text with special attention paid to helping teachers utilize technology as an asset within the teaching process. Digital storytelling, blogging, and other online activities are covered and there is a greater emphasis placed on integrating communication technology into language and literacy programs. The connection between functional literacies and new literacies is a focal point as well. An updated variety of Canadian children's and young adult literature is provided and greater attention is paid to narrative nonfiction and creative nonfiction sources. Finally, this text includes a wealth of instructor resources including an instructor's manual, test item file, and access to learning solutions managers through Pearson.

The text is divided into eleven chapters. The first few chapters begin by addressing basic learning as it relates to the language arts and how literacy is directly tied to this discipline. Student diversities and cultural differences as they relate to reading are also covered. This is followed by a description of emergent literacy and a description of how young children become readers. Practices such as read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and reading and writing workshops are all described in effective detail. At the crux of this is an introduction to and details regarding the breadth of literacy; specifically focusing on listening and speaking skills (which are often overlooked in a text of this type) and the reading and writing processes (which tend to be traditionally covered in this type of text). Chapters 6 and 7 both focus exclusively on reading and writing narrative texts and reading and writing expository texts. The emphasis placed on these topics is directly related to the increased frequency in which narratives and particularly expository pieces have been used within Canadian classrooms and other educational settings. A wide variety of subcategories is covered in these two chapters, but the importance placed on non-fiction works coincides with that trend in education circles.

Later chapters cover traditional topics such as grammar, spelling, handwriting, and word processing; all very practical in scope. Chapter 9 addresses visual literacy, which is an interesting departure from the rest of the text, but one that has value in our

increasingly technological society. The evolutionary movement is well detailed in this chapter with special attention paid to purpose, persuasion, and propaganda. Finally, the last two chapters describe the natural connection that can be made between fine arts and the language arts and how to structure in-class reading and writing workshops. Again, the practical nature of these chapters will prove valuable to classroom teachers.

At its core, the seventh Canadian edition of *Language and Literacy: Content and Teaching Strategies* offers a comprehensive look at literacy as an academic experience. It provides a basic introduction to teaching literacy within a language arts classroom as well as intertwining it with the fine arts. The book presents teaching strategies that focus on reading, writing, listening, speaking, and the visual components of literacy. The basics are covered with regard to teaching grammar, spelling, handwriting, and word use. Extra emphasis is placed on reading and writing narrative texts as well as expository texts, with special attention paid to utilizing technology across both of these modalities. The text is well organized, clearly written, practical in nature, and should be a viable teaching tool for aspiring or current classroom literacy teachers.

References

Jones, Jill A. (2006). "Content Subjects and Reading: Are All Teachers Reading Teachers?" Faculty Publications and Presentations. Paper 72. http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/educ_fac_pubs/72