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Yay for the YA Novem! (Updated)

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Posted on [March 6, 2008](#) by [Honor Moorman](#)

As I mentioned in class, one of my favorite trends in [young adult literature](#) right now is the Novel in Verse, or Novem (novel + poem). Over the last few years, I've been collecting a list of titles that would fall into this category. I've only read about half of the books on this list, but I've put a star by the ones that are my favorites so far. Perhaps I'll review some of them in more detail later. Please suggest additional titles if you know of some. Thanks!

Adoff, Jaime. *Names Will Never Hurt Me*.

Anaya, Rudolfo. *Elegy on the Death of Cesar Chavez: A Poem*.

Bateson, Catherine. *Dangerous Girl*.

Bateson, Catherine. *The Year it All Happened*.

Bingham, Kelly. *Shark Girl*.

Bingham, Kelly. *Sharp Teeth*.

Bryant, Jen. *Pieces of Georgia*.

Bryant, Jen. *The Trial*.

Carson, Anne. *Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse*.

Carvell, Marlene. *Sweetgrass Basket*.

Carvell, Marlene. *Who Will Tell My Brother?*

*Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*.

Cofer, Judith Ortiz. *Call Me Maria*.

*Cormier, Robert. *Frenchtown Summer*.

Corrigan, Eireann. *Splintering*.

Corrigan, Eireann. *You Remind Me of You: A Poetry Memoir*.

*Creech, Sharon. *Heartbeat*.

*Creech, Sharon. *Love That Dog*.

Crist-Evans, Craig. *North of Everything*.

Fields, Terri. *After the Death of Anna Gonzales*.

*Frost, Helen. *Keesha's House*.

*Frost, Helen. *Spinning Through the Universe*.

George, Kristine O'Connell. *Swimming Upstream: Middle School Poems*.

Glenn, Mel. *Back to Class*.

Glenn, Mel. *Class Dismissed!: High School Poems*.

Glenn, Mel. *Class Dismissed Two: More High School Poems*.

Glenn, Mel. *Foreign Exchange: A Mystery in Poems*.

*Glenn, Mel. *Jump Ball: A Basketball Season in Poems*.

Glenn, Mel. *My Friend's Got This Problem, Mr. Candler*.

Glenn, Mel. *One Order to Go*.

Glenn, Mel. *Play-by-Play*.

*Glenn, Mel. *Split Image: A Story in Poems*.

Glenn, Mel. *Squeeze Play*.

Glenn, Mel. *The Taking of Room 114: A Hostage Drama in Poems*.

*Glenn, Mel. *Who Killed Mr. Chippendale? A Mystery in Poems*.

*Grimes, Nikki. *Bronx Masquerade*.

*Grimes, Nikki. *Dark Sons*.

*Grimes, Nikki. *Jazmin's Notebook*.

Grimes, Nikki. *My Man Blue*. (picture book)

Grimes, Nikki. *What is Goodbye?*

Grover, Lori Ann. *Hold Me Tight*.

Grover, Lori Ann. *Loose Threads*.

Grover, Lori Ann. *On Pointe: a novel*.

Hathorn, Libby. *Volcano Boy: a novel in verse*.

Hemphill, Stephanie. *Things Left Unsaid: A Novel in Poems*.

*Herrera, Juan Felipe. *CrashBoomLove: A Novel in Verse*.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Downtown Boy*.

Herrick, Steven. *Do-Wrong Ron*.

Herrick, Steven. *By the River*.

*Herrick, Steven. *Love, Ghosts, & Facial Hair*.

Herrick, Steven. *Naked Bunyip Dancing*.

Herrick, Steven. *A Place Like This*.

*Herrick, Steven. *The Simple Gift*.

Herrick, Steven. *The Spangled Drongo*.

Herrick, Steven. *Tom Jones Saves the World*.

Hesse, Karen. *Aleutian Sparrow*.

*Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*.

Hesse, Karen. *A Time of Angels*.

*Hesse, Karen. *Witness*.

High, Linda Oatman. *Sister Slam and the Poetic Motormouth Road Trip*.

Hopkins, Ellen. *Crank*.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett. *Been To Yesterday: Poems of a Life*.

Janeczko, Paul B. *Stardust Otel*.

*Janeczko, Paul B. *Worlds Afire*.

Jeffs, Sandy. *Poems from the Madhouse*.

Johnson, Angela. *Running Back to Ludie*.

*Johnson, Lindsay Lee. *Soul Moon Soup*.

*Koertge, Ron. *The Brimstone Journals*.

*Koertge, Ron. *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup*.

Korman, Gordon. *Son of the Mob*.

Levithan, David. *The Realm of Possibility*.

Lowery, Linda. *Laurie Tells*.

Major, Kevin. *Ann and Seamus*.

Merrell, Billy. *Talking in the Dark*.

Montgomery, Hugh. *The Voyage of the Arctic Tern*.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Angel to Angel: A Mother's Gift of Love*.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Blues Journey*.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Brown Angels: An Album of Pictures and Verse*. (picture book)

*Myers, Walter Dean. *Harlem: A Poem*.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Street Love*.

Nelson, Marilyn. *Carver: A Life in Poems*.

*Nelson, Marilyn. *A Wreath for Emmitt Till*.

Rocklin, Joanne. *For Your Eyes Only!*

Rosenberg, Liz. *17: A Novel in Prose Poems*.

Rowe, Leanne. *Girl X Recreated*.

Rylant, Cynthia. *God Went to Beauty School*.

Rylant, Cynthia. *Soda Jerk*. (picture book)

Sandell, Lisa Ann. *Song of the Sparrow*. (Thanks, Blakely!)

Seabrooke, Brenda. *Judy Scuppernong*.

Seabrooke, Brenda. *Under the Pear Tree*.

Smith, Hope Anita. *The Way a Door Closes*.

*Sones, Sonya. *One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies*.

Sones, Sonya. *Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy*.

Sones, Sonya. *What My Mother Doesn't Know: A Story of Love and Confusion*.

Soto, Gary. *Fearless Fernie: Hanging Out with Fernie and Me*.

Soto, Gary. *Worlds Apart: Traveling with Fernie and Me*.

Stevens, Roger. *The Journal of Danny Chaucer (Poet)*.

Stone, Tanya Lee. *A Bad Boy Can Be Good for a Girl*.

Taylor, Michelle A. *The Angel of Barbican High*.

Testa, Maria. *Almost Forever*.

Testa, Maria. *Becoming Joe DiMaggio*.

Testa, Maria. *Something About America*.

Turner, Ann. *Learning To Swim: A Memoir*.

Turner, Ann. *A Lion's Hunger: Poems of First Love*.

*Wayland, April Halprin. *Girl Coming in for a Landing: A Novel in Poems*.

Wild, Margaret. *One Night*.

Wild, Margaret. *Jinx*.

Williams, Julie. *Escaping Tornado Season: A Story in Poems*.

Williams, Vera B. *Amber Was Brave, Essie Was Smart*.

Wittlinger, Ellen. *Hard Love*.

Wolf, Allan. *Zane's Trace*.

Wolf, Allan. *New Found Land: Lewis and Clark's Voyage of Discovery*.

Wolff, Virginia Euwer. *Make Lemonade*.

Wolff, Virginia Euwer. *True Believer*.

Wong, Janet S. *Behind the Wheel: Driving Poems*.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Locomotion*.

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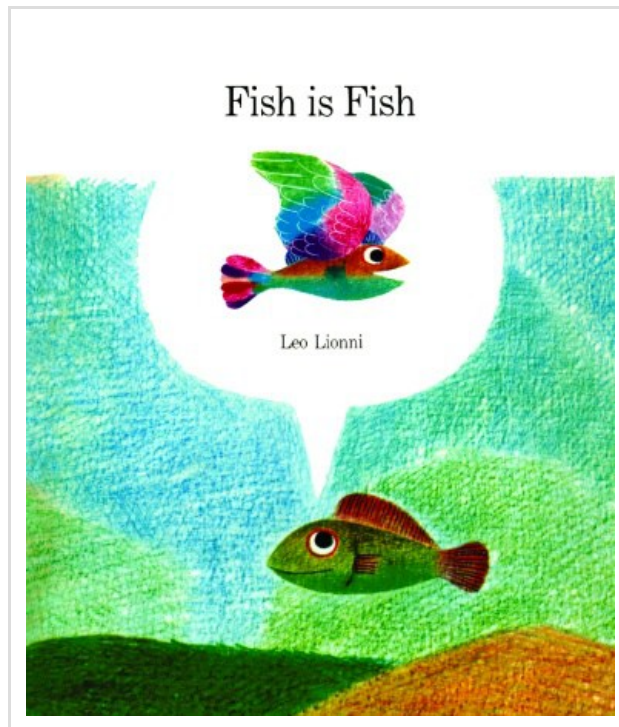
Critical theory in the high school classroom



Posted on [February 29, 2008](#) by [Honor Moorman](#)

Last week in the methods course, we considered the role of critical theory in the high school curriculum, and I mentioned that I had recently heard [Deborah Appleman](#), the author of *Critical Encounters in High School English: Teaching Literary Theory to Adolescents*, speak at the [TCTELA Conference](#). Her talk was

entitled, “What We Teach and Why: Teaching Adolescents to Read Words and Worlds Through Multiple Perspectives,” and here are some of the key ideas I captured in my notes:



The most important reason to use literary theory is that it helps students to be able to read and understand texts (and the world) from diverse perspectives. In the picture book, *Fish is Fish* by [Leo Lionni](#), the fish’s vision of the world is limited based on the limits of his experience. He thinks everyone else is a fish. We too, are limited by our experiences. Our world view, our paradigm, our notion of reality is uniquely based on the experiences and ideas we have each encountered. (You can’t know what you don’t know until you know it, right?) Thus, the value of introducing critical theories to students lies in building their capacities for multiplicity, an important habit of mind that enables us to see things from other points of view. It is not about turning high school students into literary critics but rather empowering them to read the word and the world through multiple perspectives.

Appleman recommends starting with accessible activities such as having students compare different versions of the same event—a shared classroom experience, or an apocryphal family story—and engaging students in reading and writing fairy tales from various perspectives—a la *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by [Jon Scieszka](#). She advocates introducing the various literary theories with poetry, having small groups each read the same poem through a different lens, and she suggests using kid-friendly texts like *Shrek* to introduce that elusive theory—deconstruction.

As Seen on TV: Gradual release and think-alouds



Posted on [February 7, 2008](#) by [Honor Moorman](#)

In the methods class this week, we discussed the gradual release of responsibility and the think-aloud strategy. I think it's interesting to note that these teaching and learning practices can also be found on some of today's popular TV shows.

For example, the gradual release of responsibility model can be found on shows like *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, *What Not to Wear*, *Super Nanny*, and almost anything on the TLC or DIY channels. In each of these shows the expert demonstrates and models the new skill, involves the learner in guided practice, and then turns over the task to the learner(s) for independent practice.

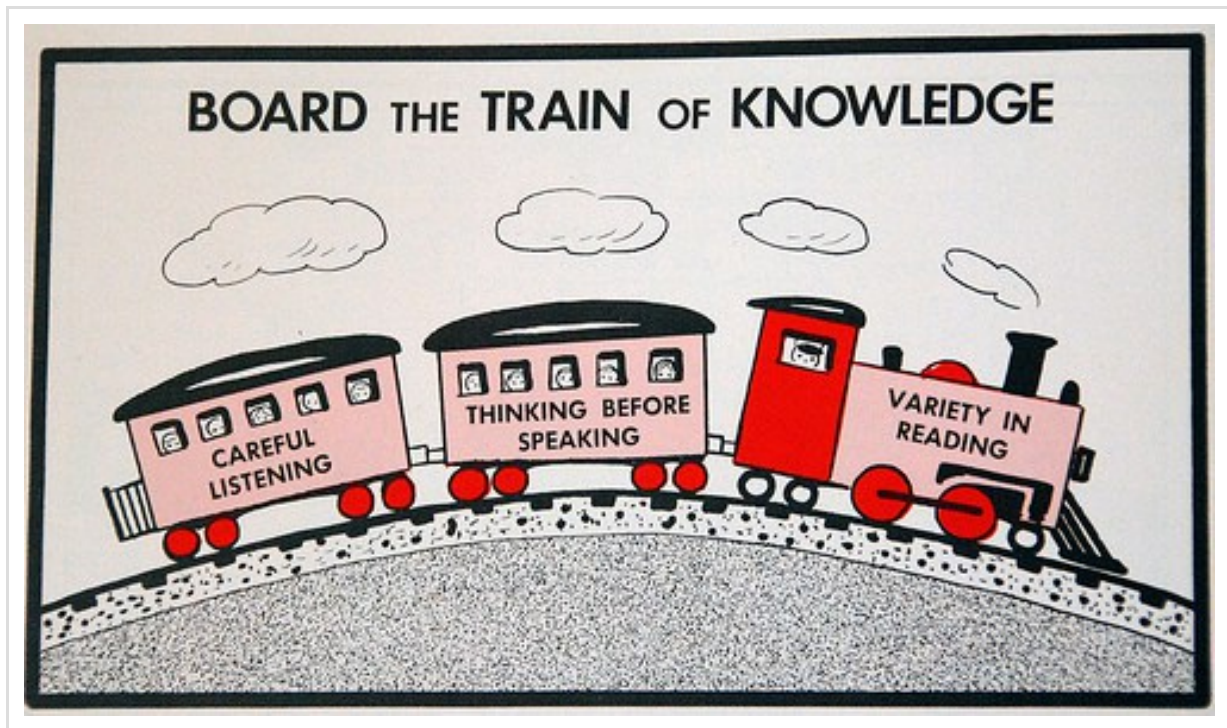
We also see examples of think-alouds on game shows and reality TV. How much fun would it be to watch a game show like *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, *Deal or No Deal*, or *1 vs. 100* without getting to hear what the contestants are thinking? Viewers don't just want to know the contestant's answers and the outcome of the game. They want to vicariously experience the whole process by having access to the contestant's thoughts along the way. Similarly, viewers get to hear the inner monologues of their favorite reality-TV personalities on shows like *Survivor*, *Big Brother*, and *Project Runway* when the cast members reveal their opinions and private thoughts in the interview room.

So when you're introducing gradual release or think-alouds to your students, try using TV analogies to explain how and why you're using these strategies!

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Speaking and listening in the English classroom: Practice makes perfect, but teaching comes first





Sometimes it's tempting to feel like we're covering all the standards all the time because our students are reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and representing almost every day in our classrooms. However, while practice is very important, it's not enough to simply have students incidentally doing those things. We have to give them instruction—not, instructions, but *instruction*—modeling, demonstrations, explanations, experiences—and have them actively engaged in learning *how* to speak and listen more effectively in increasingly varied and sophisticated contexts.

So here are some online resources that can help us guide our students to being better speakers and listeners by giving them lots of opportunities for practice *and* by really teaching them the knowledge and skills of the speaking and listening standards.

The [Language Resource Guide](#) on the [Greece Central School District English Language Arts](#) homepage has a section devoted to Listening Skills and Strategies with suggestions for Before, During, and After-Listening strategies as well as a resource for Speaking Skills and Strategies with guidelines for preparing and delivering a speech along with an evaluation form.

The [Rubistar](#) rubric creator site also has a few assessment tools for speaking and listening. There is an oral presentation rubric under “Oral Projects” and a listening rubric under “Reading-Literature Circles.”

The [Discovery Education Streaming Videos](#) site has a Discovering Language Arts: Listening and Speaking series that includes six video segments, each of which invites students to listen actively and critically for specific characteristics of a spoken message.

Image Credit: “Board the Train of Knowledge” CC by extraface via Flickr

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“Everything” is on YouTube! (including great examples of literary terms)



Posted on [January 8, 2008](#) by [Honor Moorman](#)

Last semester in our [English methods course](#), a really fun trend developed where students who were teaching mini-lessons on literary terms almost always used YouTube clips to introduce them.

For example, the Pachelbel Rant video to introduce motifs, the *V for Vendetta* speech for alliteration, or the Butterfly Poem (A Study in Apostrophe) . . .

So I thought we should propose a session for the upcoming [NCTE Annual Convention](#), which is being held in San Antonio this year. The convention theme is “Because Shift Happens: Teaching in the Twenty-First Century”—I think our topic fits perfectly!

To my students:

Here’s a draft of our proposal. Please share your thoughts, questions, and suggestions, especially if you are planning to participate. Thanks!

Possible Title:

A 21st-Century Approach to Teaching Literary Terms

Annotation:

(50 words; this is what will actually get printed in the conference booklet)
Looking for a way to interest your “digital native” students in the study of literary terms? Try using YouTube! Presenters will share a variety of strategies for engaging students in textual analysis by integrating film clips and user videos from YouTube alongside traditional literature. Participants will take away a complete set of lessons and resources on CD.

Description:

(500 words; this is where we have to “sell” our idea to the committee)
When pre-service teachers were given the opportunity to teach a practice mini-lesson introducing a literary term as part of their English methods course at Texas State University, most of them chose to incorporate a YouTube video as part of their lesson. These film clips and home videos not only served as engaging introductions to the literary devices under consideration, they also demonstrated that the literary techniques being studied can be found in all kinds of texts, including the multimedia and Web 2.0 texts our “digital native” students are so familiar with.

By making use of YouTube, these pre-service teachers had intuitively fulfilled two of NCTE’s “Research-Based Recommendations for Effective Instruction in 21st-Century Literacies,” that teachers “[e]xplore technologies students are using outside of class and find ways to incorporate them into your teaching . . . [and] include a broad variety of media and genres in class texts” (5), as well as the advice of Lorna Collier who writes, “[o]ne way to capture students’ interest in a traditional topic is to allow them to use nontraditional, 21st-century methods to explore it” (7).

Many English teachers use popular culture “as a ‘hook’ or ‘attention grabber’ in

the classroom to draw students into the traditional elements of the English curriculum” (Callahan and Low 56). And pop culture texts, such as song lyrics and advertisements, often provide student-friendly examples of literary devices and other rhetorical techniques. Bringing pop culture texts into the curriculum also means bringing visual and multimedia texts into the classroom. Alvermann and Xu assert that “[b]ecause many popular culture texts make use of multimedia, they can be helpful in extending school literacy teaching and learning beyond traditional print-based materials” (152). Certainly, the increasingly visual and multimedia nature of our culture demands that we incorporate multimodal literacy into the language arts curriculum to “help prepare [students] to communicate and interpret messages confidently and successfully in an increasingly complex world” (Kaufmann 1).

In *Reading in the Dark*, John Golden advocates using film clips to “practice the reading and analytical skills that we want our students to have and then turn to the written text” (xiv; italics in original). As Golden asserts, “the skills [students] use to decode the visual image are the same skills they use for a written text” (xiii). Therefore, visual, multimedia, and pop culture texts can be used to scaffold students’ growth as readers of traditional print text. Jerome Evans suggests that “[a]rtifacts of pop culture serve as advanced organizers for students, who can then connect new material . . . to their own experiences” and “[s]tudents can more readily practice critical-thinking skills. . . with familiar material, and they will be better equipped to tackle literature new to them and discover ideas they have never thought of before” (33, 37).

In this session, we will share a variety of ways for using YouTube videos to teach literary terms. Since these early career teachers will be sharing the evolution of their thinking about incorporating YouTube into their teaching of literature, their presentations will be relevant to participants who are new to YouTube, as well as those who are already comfortable using this resource in the classroom. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in selected activities and will leave with a complete set of lessons and resources.

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Alvermann, Donna E., and Shelley Hong Xu. “Children’s Everyday Literacies: Intersection of Popular Culture and Language Arts Instruction.” *Language Arts* 81.2 (2003): 145-54.

Callahan, Meg, and Bronwen E. Low. “At the Crossroads of Expertise: The Risky Business of Teaching Popular Culture.” *English Journal* 93.3 (2004): 52-57.

Collier, Lorna. “The Shift to 21st-Century Literacies.” *NCTE Council Chronicle* 17.2 (2007): 4-8.

Evans, Jerome. "From Sheryl Crow to Homer Simpson: Literature and Composition through Pop Culture." *English Journal* 93.3 (2004): 32-38.

Golden, John. *Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2001.

Kaufmann, Felice, ed. "Supporting Literacy with Student-Made Documentaries." *Classroom Notes Plus* 25.2 (2007): 1.

NCTE. *21st-Century Literacies: A Policy Research Brief*. 2007.

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