

■ ARTICLES

# Calling Ms. Frizzle: Sharing Informational Texts in the Elementary Classroom

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Zapata and Maloch feature pedagogical considerations for teachers as they plan for engaging and generative informational text experiences for young children.

**THE CHILDREN IN** Jessica's classroom eagerly put their books and pencils down to listen as their teacher introduces the special guest in the room, Pinky the cornsnake.<sup>1</sup> The children look closely as Jessica points to Pinky, who resides in a clear glass case filled with a heat lamp, a bowl of water, a piece of driftwood, and bedding. Next to the case is a display of informational books on snakes that Jessica previews for the children. As Jessica features each book, including *Snakes* by Seymour Simon (2007) and *Snakes* by Gail Gibbons (2010), she points to diagrams of snakes' bodies and shares interesting content about snakes. She suggests that because they have Pinky as a guest in their classroom, the class should learn more about him by reading these books.

Upon finishing her book talks, Jessica tentatively, but willingly, picks up Pinky and brings him closer to each table so every child can see him more closely. As she does, she thinks aloud by noticing what the snake is doing, and shares her wonderings: "Do you notice his tongue is going in and out? Why do you think that's happening? He feels very smooth. [She looks at one student.] I see you are observing his eyes. What do you notice?" After walking around the room with Pinky, Jessica explains, "You know who I'm trying to be right now? Calm and like I do this all the time? I'm trying to be Ms. Frizzle<sup>2</sup> from Magic School Bus" (field notes, October 16, 2013).

As we share texts designed to provide information, we hope to elicit from children the kinds of curiosities and questions that will later drive them back into those very same texts, and we try, as Jessica did, to become Ms. Frizzle, genuinely interested and seemingly unafraid to dig a bit deeper to understand new phenomena. As teachers approach the work of sharing informational texts with young children, what other considerations do they keep in mind? Drawing from a study of how young children learn to read and write informational texts, we contend that there are implications for how we select, share, and support informational text reading in young children's classrooms. In this article, we specifically lift from the informational text selections, the curriculum, and the experiences of three third-grade teachers and their students in the context of a classroom study of the solar system. Based on that work, we present two facets that are important for teachers to consider as they plan for the most engaging and fruitful informational text experiences for young children: informational text

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Pinky joined the classroom as part of a rotating animal program sponsored by the local school district.

<sup>2</sup> Ms. Frizzle is a fictional character in the beloved Magic School Bus series written by Joanna Cole and illustrated by Bruce Degen.

selection and authentic instruction. Below, we provide a brief description of relevant work in this area to set the stage for what we learned in these classrooms.

### Informational Texts in the Elementary Classroom

Teaching and learning about informational texts has become an area of much interest to researchers and educators in recent years. Numerous educators have revealed the scarcity of informational texts in primary classrooms and advocated for their use while noting numerous benefits (Duke, 2000; Jeong, Gaffney, & Choi, 2010; Pappas, 1991). More recently, the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and other state language arts standards, which include notable shifts toward nonfiction texts, opens us all to discussions of what we mean by nonfiction, how we share nonfiction texts in the classroom, and how to best support children's navigation of these texts.

What kinds of texts are we talking about? A number of researchers, but not all, use *nonfiction* as an umbrella term to include all texts that present factual information (e.g., Duke & Tower, 2004; Moss, 2008). Researchers have worked to clarify differences in nonfiction texts. Duke and Tower, for example, divide nonfiction into five categories of texts: informational texts, concept books, procedural texts, biographies, and reference materials. Colman (2007) argues that the distinctions between informational text-related labels and the way they are negotiated in classroom settings do indeed matter because they carry tacit meanings that can either foster or clarify misconceptions about these subgenres. In this article, we lean on the work of Duke to understand informational texts as texts written with the primary purpose of conveying information about the natural and social worlds and having particular text features to accomplish this purpose (Duke, 2003).

Importantly, we know that children are quite capable of learning about and from informational texts when given the opportunity. Research indicates that young children benefit from instruction about these texts and from occasions to read and learn from them (e.g., Pappas, 1991). Additionally, when given these kinds of opportunities, students grow in their comprehension of such texts and in their use of these genres, strategies, and structures in their own writing (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007; Williams et al., 2005). A number of studies have been conducted related to what this instruction might look like in primary classrooms (e.g., Donovan & Smolkin, 2002, 2006; Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012; Duke & Tower, 2004; Maloch & Zapata, 2011; Purcell-Gates et al., 2007). In addition, a growing body of literature for teachers

and teacher educators has emerged to help guide young writers of informational texts (e.g., Dorfman & Cappelli, 2009; Portalupi & Fletcher, 2001).

In a recent review of research about informational texts in classrooms, Maloch and Bomer (2013) identified four principles: making informational texts available and accessible to children, providing authentic opportunities for engagement, engaging students through interactive reading opportunities, and being explicit when necessary. With regard to explicit teaching about informational texts, they argue,

What seems abundantly clear to us from the research is that this explicit instruction is only effective for real reading and writing inasmuch as it is situated within authentic opportunities for reading and writing informational texts—opportunities that reflect what children might encounter outside of school. Only within these contexts of immersion, demonstrations, and support will explicit instruction make sense to young readers and writers, at least in ways that may transfer to new contexts and propel their continued inquiry and learning. (p. 446)

In other words, instruction about and with informational texts must be situated in *authentic* contexts that are guided by students' own interests as they grow understanding and expertise in a topic of their choosing.

### Gathering and Making Sense of Teachers' Instruction

The larger study informing this article focused on three culturally and linguistically diverse third-grade classrooms in the context of their study of informational texts about the solar system. For this investigation, we sought to explore the ways teachers supported students as they navigated and collected content from an array of literature (print, video, and online texts) focused on sharing information about the solar system. The teachers we discuss here were chosen because they had expressed interest in thinking more about the ways informational texts function in the classroom. Jessica and Jane were in their fourth year of teaching, and Karen was in her third. As a team, they shared materials and plans for content area instruction and had recently completed their certification as Master Reading Teachers. As part of their own professional development with informational texts, they also read from the works of Stead (2006) and Hoyt (2002).

To understand these three classrooms, specifically the ways the teachers and students made use of informational

texts, we spent a year in their classrooms, with a focused period of observations during the six-week unit on the solar system. We video- and audiotaped their instruction, interviewed the teachers together and separately, and collected documents and student work created during the unit. To make sense of their instruction, we used a constant comparative approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). First, we individually engaged in open coding of the data, examining the verbal and, where applicable, the gestural interactions of teachers and students while working with informational texts. Contexts for such interactions included whole-class read-aloud experiences, small-group and paired interactions, and teacher-student conferences with informational texts. We also analyzed the individual and group interviews of the teachers for insights into the stances and decisions informing their instruction. We noted, for instance, how students chose texts, how each teacher made informational texts available to her students, and how students responded to the teachers' instructional approaches. After the independent coding of the data, we conferred to share our observations and form conceptual themes of how informational texts are read and shared in the context of a classroom unit of study.

In the remainder of this article, we focus on what we learned from these three third-grade teachers about engaging students in authentic instruction with informational texts. We describe aspects of this instruction that we see as considerations that teachers may take into account as they plan for informational text learning in their classrooms.

### Choosing Informational Texts for Young Children

Before they began their inquiry unit on the solar system, Jessica, Jane, and Karen wanted first to locate an array of informational texts for their students. Given the resurgence of informational trade books for children among publishers, these third-grade teachers were able to select from a variety of subgenres of informational texts. Informational picturebooks (Sipe, 2012), poetic nonfiction (Kesler, 2012), and popular hybrid informational texts (Pappas, 2006)—books that merged the features of narrative and expository texts—composed the majority of their collection. Gilles and her colleagues (2001) noted that encouraging students to read across texts in this way encourages critical reading and negotiation of multiple perspectives. While questions have been raised regarding the misconceptions that can result from the reading of hybrid informational texts, we emphasize teachers' thoughtful mediations as significant to students' reading. In this article, we specifically point to the importance of teacher's think-alouds as a scaffold for students' reading of diverse informational texts.

As they collaborated to plan their unit and select appropriate texts, the teachers first selected core informational texts related to the solar system to share across all three classrooms. In addition to sharing these texts, the teachers were able to build individualized collections of diverse informational texts for their classrooms with titles from their local libraries or personal stacks. The teachers shared with us during their interviews that as they made their selections, they considered the accessibility of the print, the visual features or inviting qualities of the text, and the scientific content itself.

### Accessibility of Informational Texts

As teachers selected informational texts, they considered the importance of each text's accessibility. Students' ability to negotiate a text's complexity in self-selected informational texts and during classroom inquiry opportunities seemed to be of the utmost importance. Below, the teachers discuss their informational text selections during a focus group interview:

**Jane:** I think the trouble they have sometimes is the reading level of the informational book. Like they rely on the pictures a lot, and if the picture's engaging, then it pulls them into that page and they'll read it....They might share it, a lot of the Magic Tree House books they have, like fiction and nonfiction counterpart.

**Jessica:** It's called the Research Guides. Mary Pope Osborne is doing the nonfiction part of that book. It's really cool. The kids love it, too.

**Jane:** Yeah, they can have both out at the same time, on the same topic, and they can just—I mean, The Magic Tree House series already throws in a lot of great factual information about a topic, but with a Research Guide next to them, they can get even more about it.

**Karen:** It's nice because our kids like it because Magic Tree House books are a little easier for some of them, but they're right on par for a lot of them. So, the nonfiction being a little bit easier is awesome.

What Jane, Jessica, and Karen suggest in this exchange is the significance of finding informational texts that not only offer "factual information about a topic" but also prove to be readable by their young readers. The teachers explicitly point to informational trade books in transitional chapter book formats as ideal titles for literature collections designed for third graders learning about a particular topic. During their classroom study, *Space: A Nonfiction Companion to Magic Tree House #8: Midnight on the Moon* by Will

Osborne and Mary Pope Osborne (2002) and its fictional counterpart, *Midnight on the Moon* by Mary Pope Osborne (1996), both illustrated by Sal Murdocca, were also received by both teachers and students as valuable pairings with denser informational picturebooks, such as *13 Planets: The Latest View of the Solar System* by David Aguilar (2011) and *The Mighty Mars Rovers: The Incredible Adventures of Spirit and Opportunity* by Elizabeth Rusch (2012), as well as poetic nonfiction, such as Douglas Florian's (2007) *Comets, Stars, the Moon, and Mars: Space Poems and Paintings*. In this way, students were able to read across selected books that varied in text complexity, form, and genre. The pairing of both complex and accessible informational texts allowed students to discern facts that they had gathered across sources. More importantly, students, no matter their command as decoders of print, were able to identify informational texts that they could read independently as contributors in their classroom study of the solar system.

**VISUAL FEATURES OF INFORMATIONAL TEXTS.** All three teachers also recognized the importance of the visual features of the informational texts made available to their students. As Jane explained,

They rely on the pictures a lot, and if the picture's engaging, then it pulls them into that page and they'll read it. But a lot of their nonfiction books, it's not a lot of "sit down and read cover to cover" book, or you use the table of contents to find what you're looking for. It's more of a skimming and scanning thing, and when they find something interesting, like a photo, they'll stop and pause on that page.

Jane recognized the importance of the visual appeal of the graphics in informational texts and identified this as a feature that often drove students deeper into their exploration of these texts. Indeed, we often observed students closely examining the graphics within the informational texts, noting the cutaway diagrams of the sun in *13 Planets: The Latest View of the Solar System* by David Aguilar (2011), talking over the two-page illustration of the solar system in *Space Encyclopedia: A Tour of Our Solar System and Beyond* by David Aguilar (2013), or sharing the crisp color photographs of Earth in Seymour Simon's (2003) *Earth: Our Planet in Space*.<sup>3</sup>

There is reason to suspect that the importance Jane places on the visuals, or graphics, in informational texts is worth considering when selecting informational texts. Duke and her colleagues (2013) recently noted the growing significance of graphical components within informational texts. In their study of 60 K–3 children, the researchers explored

the varied function of graphics within informational texts. They pointed out that the graphics often conveyed important content not available in the written text alone.

In our analysis of the digital and trade book informational texts in Jessica's classroom (Maloch & Zapata, 2012), we concluded that the well-selected informational trade books in her classroom were richer in visual and other multimodal content than the solar system–related websites that she had selected for her students. Unlike the websites, the informational picturebooks that she had selected provided multiple points of entry and diverse graphics, such as maps, diagrams, and pop-out boxes that varied in size, placement, and color—all of which afforded more opportunities for students to not only generate additional meanings but also sustain engagement.

**PRESENTATION OF FACTUAL CONTENT WITHIN INFORMATIONAL TEXTS.** Decisions about book selection for students in their classroom study of the solar system had as much to do with the content itself as it did with the text's difficulty and visual appeal. As teachers conferred with children over their informational text reading, they encouraged the children to read across what Pappas (2006) calls typical and atypical (hybrid) informational texts. When Jane sat to confer with Monica, for instance, Jane noted that she was reading from Douglas Florian's (2007) *Comets, Stars, the Moon, and Mars: Space Poems and Paintings*, a poetic nonfiction text related to the solar system. Jane explained to Monica that although this was a valuable resource for her study and would likely "be helpful at some point," she would probably find information about the size of her planet, Mercury, in a typical informational text titled *Scholastic Atlas of Space* edited by Johanne Champagne (2005). We observed teachers do just this, pair multiple informational text types in children's hands, in order to support their science learning. Specifically, hybrid informational texts, typical informational texts, and poetic nonfiction were made available, valued, and read during their study of the solar system and were regarded as worthwhile sources to inform and extend the explorations the children were engaged in.

Karen guided one of her students, Rebecca, in a similar way. Karen explained that although *The Magic School*

#### NOTE

<sup>3</sup>Since the study occurred, science knowledge has developed and changed. We cite the most recent editions of the informational texts in this article so readers can access the most current scientific content.

*Bus Lost in the Solar System* by Joanna Cole (1990) helped her imagine what it might look like in space, Rebecca might also like to read from *Our Solar System* by Seymour Simon (2014) to learn more about the physical features of her planet. As students shifted across stances when reading informational texts—steeping (building familiarity), exploring (selectively reading), or searching (seeking specific information)—teachers were on hand to put the just right title in their young readers' hands (Maloch & Zapata, 2011). In doing so, they were encouraging students' reading of multiple informational texts and types.

A number of researchers have recommended the close inspection of informational trade books as teachers select literature for children. These researchers (e.g., Donovan & Smolkin, 2002; Pappas, 2006; Saul & Dieckman, 2005) recommend consideration along several dimensions, including content, visual features, readability, and genre or text type. While some scholars (e.g., Kristo, Colman, & Wilson, 2008; Pappas, 2006) have questioned the uses of hybrid informational texts for science learning because they lack the scientific rhetoric related to the content presented in the texts, we observed Jane, Jessica, and Karen express a value for both typical and atypical informational texts as resourceful and interesting material for their children's science learning. In making conscious efforts to share favorite informational text authors and titles, we have included a list of solar system–related titles (most recent editions) from which to select (see Table 1).

### Engaging Instruction With Informational Text

We observed Jessica, Jane, and Karen primarily integrate informational texts as part of their science and social studies curriculum in authentic ways. They designed classroom investigations into broad topics, such as landforms or the solar system, and always looked to informational texts to support the experience. Significant to this article is how they described this part of the day as an “inquiry” time informed by teacher- and student-generated questions. Teachers typically guided students through a class inquiry into a shared subtopic to set the stage for the unit and to generate students' own hypotheses and wonderings about the phenomenon studied. For instance, through read-alouds of informational texts and class discussions, Jane invited students into explorations about the sun. As they explored, she recorded students' questions and discoveries from the informational texts on a public language chart. In her classroom, she used

a K-W-L chart to record these questions and learnings. Jessica engaged in the same kind of process but used a RAN (reading and analyzing nonfiction) chart (Stead, 2006). A RAN chart looks similar to a K-W-L chart except that it has five columns labeled “What I Think I Know,” “Confirmed,” “Misconceptions,” “New Information,” and “Wonderings,” offering students more flexibility to work through emerging concepts. During this time, all three teachers modeled note-taking strategies and how to navigate features of the texts, such as the table of contents or diagrams.

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**As students shifted across stances when reading informational texts—steeping (building familiarity), exploring (selectively reading), or searching (seeking specific information)—teachers were on hand to put the just right title in their young readers' hands.**

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Students were then asked to select a planet about which they could become an expert. Over several weeks, the students worked in pairs, small groups, or independently to examine informational texts in the classroom and gather facts about their planet to record in a note-taking guide. The guide served as a record of learning and later as a source for their final project. Attached to their inquiry time was a learning celebration where students disseminated their learning to family and school community audiences. To conclude the solar system study, each classroom submitted a collection of travel brochures about the planets in the solar system and participated in the Third-Grade Solar System Travel Convention. Although many factors played a role in the way the units unfolded, in this article, we focus on the role of immersion experiences and teacher think-alouds as valuable components of informational text instruction.

### Informational Text Immersion

All three teachers planned for immersion experiences, or book floods (Guthrie, 1982), with the informational texts that they had selected. We observed the children read the texts eagerly during this time, taking an exploration stance (Maloch & Zapata, 2011) as they read independently or in pairs (see Figure 1). This was a very intentioned time according to the teachers. Jessica valued this time to generate enthusiasm for informational texts among her students. She explained,

We also go to the library together and get a flood of books about a topic. Usually, the first day, we always



TABLE 1

**Favorite informational texts shared during classroom study of the solar system  
(newest editions referenced)**

<p><b>Favorite Typical Informational Titles About the Solar System</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aguilar, D.A. (2007). <i>Planets, stars, and galaxies: A visual encyclopedia of our universe</i>. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.</li> <li>• Aguilar, D.A. (2010). <i>Super stars: The biggest, hottest, brightest, most explosive stars in the Milky Way</i>. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.</li> <li>• Aguilar, D.A. (2011). <i>13 planets: The latest view of the solar system</i>. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.</li> <li>• Aguilar, D.A. (2013). <i>Space encyclopedia: A tour of our solar system and beyond</i>. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.</li> <li>• Gibbons, G. (1996). <i>The reasons for seasons</i>. New York, NY: Holiday House.</li> <li>• Gibbons, G. (1998). <i>The moon book</i>. New York, NY: Holiday House.</li> <li>• Gibbons, G. (2008). <i>The planets</i>. New York, NY: Holiday House.</li> <li>• Rusch, E. (2007). <i>The planet hunter: The story behind what happened to Pluto</i>. (G. Francis, Illus.). Flagstaff, AZ: Rising Moon.</li> <li>• Rusch, E. (2012). <i>The mighty Mars rovers: The incredible adventures of Spirit and Opportunity</i>. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.</li> <li>• Simon, S. (1989). <i>The sun</i>. New York, NY: Mulberry.</li> <li>• Simon, S. (2003). <i>Earth: Our planet in space</i>. New York, NY: Simon &amp; Schuster.</li> <li>• Simon, S. (2012). <i>Saturn</i>. New York, NY: Morrow.</li> <li>• Simon, S. (2014). <i>Our solar system</i>. New York, NY: HarperCollins.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Favorite Poetic Nonfiction Titles About the Solar System</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Florian, D. (2007). <i>Comets, stars, the moon, and Mars: Space poems and paintings</i>. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.</li> <li>• Peddicord, J.A. (2005). <i>Night wonders</i>. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.</li> <li>• Winsor, F. (2010). <i>The space child's Mother Goose</i>. (M. Parry, Illus.). Cynthiana, KY: Purple House.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Favorite Atypical Informational Titles About the Solar System</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cole, J. (1989). <i>The magic school bus inside the Earth</i>. (B. Degen, Illus.). New York, NY: Scholastic.</li> <li>• Cole, J. (1990). <i>The magic school bus lost in the solar system</i>. (B. Degen, Illus.). New York, NY: Scholastic.</li> <li>• McNulty, F. (2005). <i>If you decide to go to the moon</i>. (S. Kellogg, Illus.). New York, NY: Scholastic.</li> <li>• Moore, E. (2000). <i>Space explorers</i>. (T. Enik, Illus.). New York, NY: Scholastic.</li> <li>• Osborne, M.P. (1996). <i>Midnight on the moon</i>. (S. Murdocca, Illus.). New York, NY: Random House.</li> <li>• Osborne, W., &amp; Osborne, M.P. (2002). <i>Space: A nonfiction companion to Magic Tree House #8: Midnight on the Moon</i>. (S. Murdocca, Illus.). New York, NY: Random House.</li> </ul>

FIGURE 1

### Readers sharing learning during an informational text book flood



just give the kids like 20 minutes of just quiet time to read, to just—I mean, we get 20 to 30 books, so they all have the ability to switch them out. Just to look and come up with wonderings, connections to things that they've already known, get excited about it, just get immersed in it. I mean, most of the wonderings come from the book floods.

Karen similarly expressed the importance of the book flood to generate momentum for the unit but also looked to students' exploration of informational texts as a time to confer with children while teaching some of their features. She shared,

I think that I've always done book floods, and I've always done them for research, but I think this is the first year where I set aside more time just to talk about the features of it. Because I think as a third-grade teacher, sometimes I have a tendency to zoom over it [the features].

Teachers valued time set aside for children to freely explore a collection of informational texts in the context of a classroom investigation because it allowed children to generate their own interests and questions while also affording teachers time to confer with individual students. During this time, teachers welcomed students' discoveries of new titles and personal inquiries, while guiding them toward identifying important facts (Maloch & Zapata, 2011). To sustain children's energy and curiosities for a topic, we observed teachers facilitate not one but multiple immersion experiences with informational texts throughout the course of the six-week unit.

FIGURE 2

### A teacher think-aloud with an informational text



#### Teacher Think-Alouds With Informational Texts

To support students through their experiences with informational texts, we also observed the teachers relying on think-aloud (Wilhelm, 2001) demonstrations (see Figure 2). The purpose of the think-aloud strategy is to model for students how skilled readers construct meaning from a text. Teachers relied on these strategic occasions to talk through the work of reading and gathering facts from informational texts. Jane, for example, explained how she relied on think-alouds to support students' note-taking decisions with informational texts:

I think it's a scaffold. You just sit there, and you talk with them. Talk it out. I mean, even figuring when you have information, that's important. It's funny to then listen [to the children think aloud]....They sit there, and they weigh the options back and forth. And it's so funny because, you know, to us it's so automatic; to them, it's a huge debate going on in their head about where they should put it or if it's important enough to make it into their guide or not.

The opportunity to model think-alouds proved to be generative for the children because it encouraged them to engage in the "huge debate" in their heads. Karen not only relied on think-alouds to model lifting facts from informational texts but also aimed to model her own joy for reading informational texts. Karen stated,

We focused on how to get information out, and then also—then as secondary, we focused on—well, actually, I guess, both, hand and hand—we focused on them [informational

texts] as being fun. I guess what the information is, getting it out, hunting for it, that can be fun!

In addition to demonstrating meaning making, teachers relied on think-alouds to model and encourage a genuine delight for reading informational texts. Teachers desired that the reading of informational texts be fun for the children and took those opportunities to ask their own questions, make hypotheses, or just be in awe of new learning uncovered within the pages of the books. Teachers approached the task of reading of informational texts with great enthusiasm, which was contagious and, we think, important.

### Conclusion

In this article, we focused intently on two means by which teachers can strengthen their students' reading of informational texts in the classroom: varying informational text selection and supporting class inquiry with informational texts. Thoughtfully selecting from the growing diversity of informational texts can only better serve young readers. By positioning students to navigate the affordances of a text's difficulty, graphics, and content, teachers can foster students' growing interest and reading of informational texts. Moreover, selecting informational texts with the inviting qualities we described may enable children to think more deeply about information located in both the text and the graphics, as well as ways in which those two sources hold meaning together. Providing time for students to participate in a book flood of informational texts allows them opportunities to identify favorite authors, uncover amazing facts, and select their primary sources. Teachers' interpretive demonstrations during read-alouds and their emphasis on collecting information to share with others can help students appreciate the multiple dimensions of representing knowledge (Smolkin & Donovan, 2005), while only further affirming students' growing attachments to informational texts. Most importantly, in the classrooms we observed, the teachers' rationales for informational text selection and guided instruction were intently shaped by a desire to support students' independent reading of informational texts for both scientific learning and pleasure. As Karen explained, "I think they should learn that they [informational texts] are fun to read and they are accessible. They don't need to be scared of them."

To that end, we close this article where we began, with Jessica's sharing of informational books about snakes.

We point to Jessica once more to remind that juxtaposing the aspects of informational text instruction presented in this article with one's disposition of curiosity for learning can further urge children into informational texts. We know that these texts can offer children endless possibilities for learning about the world around them, but we further argue that evoking one's own interests, curiosities, and enthusiasm

for new learning is part of offering children meaningful experiences with informational texts. Calling on the "Ms. Frizzle" within further sets the stage for what is possible in classrooms where curiosity is encouraged, well-selected informational texts are shared, and thoughtful guidance with these texts is standard. We hope teachers will emulate Jessica's disposition toward informational texts and evoke Ms. Frizzle as needed, as we suspect that they may find themselves fascinated by the wonders available in informational texts today. ■

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