



Donalyn Miller

with Susan Kelley

FOREWORD BY TERI S. LESESNE

Reading
in
the Wild

The Book Whisperer's
Keys to Cultivating
Lifelong Reading Habits

Praise for Reading in the Wild

“Each chapter reminds us of an important ingredient in the ‘making’ of a reader who, well, reads! From time to choice to quality . . . each disposition a reader must develop is captured gracefully and artfully and purposefully.”

—Patrick Allen, fourth-grade teacher, Douglas County Schools, Colorado, and author of *Conferring: The Keystone of Reader’s Workshop*

“Donalyn Miller’s *Reading in the Wild* is the guide we need to understand the complexities of leading readers. She knows books, she knows kids, and she knows teachers. This book gave me new ways to think about a personal literary canon and the limitations of lexile levels. If you’ve hesitated about conferring with readers, *Readers in the Wild* will get you started with a new sense of purpose and the tools for diagnosing non-reading habits that you need. Donalyn’s honest portrayal of the challenges of building reading lives is inspiring and practical.”

—Penny Kittle, high school teacher and professional development coordinator, Conway School District, New Hampshire, and author of *Book Love: Developing Depth, Stamina, and Passion in Adolescent Readers*

“Where *The Book Whisperer* was a road map for powerful and empowering reading instruction, *Reading in the Wild* is a foot placed firmly on the accelerator. Donalyn Miller once again challenges the inner workings of our classrooms—and her own—and asks, ‘If students were truly independent readers, why do they still need a teacher to orchestrate their reading lives?’ With Susan Kelley, Donalyn redefines what it means to read ‘independently’ and draws on research and classroom practice to help every child become a bona fide wild reader.”

—Chris Lehman, international speaker, consultant, and coauthor of *Pathways to the Common Core*

“This book is the perfect follow-up to *The Book Whisperer*! Not only do the authors expand upon the ideas for awakening the inner reader in every child, they also truly guide teachers at any level of experience to provide opportunities for their students to become Wild Readers. If you are looking for a book that will inspire all teachers and administrators to help students become reading tribe members, sit down and enjoy *Reading in the Wild*!”

—Marsha Thauwald, education consultant, Key Connections for Learning

“In *Reading in the Wild*, Donalyn Miller and Susan Kelley have crafted a book rich with possibility and authenticity. I feel as if they have genuinely seen my classroom, heard my questions, anticipated where I would stumble, and know my students well enough to lead me to see them in a new way. This is a unique book that acknowledges, validates, and encourages teachers. Built from the authors’ own master-practice and inquiry, this is a book that nudges, models, and authentically supports teachers in elevating their practice when taking student readers from meaningful in-class experiences to cultivating the true habits and identities of ‘Readers in the Wild’. Miller and Kelley are lead readers and visionary teachers who set the bar high, expecting students to grow from compliance to achievement, not because of limited school measures but because real readers have purpose, community, and identity. This is the kind of book we will pass amongst our colleagues, gift to those new to our field, and return to again and again. It evokes (and feeds) our own wild reading.”

—Sara Kajder, eighth-grade teacher, Shady Side Academy, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, English department chair, and author of *Adolescents and Digital Literacies: Learning Alongside Our Students*

“In her inimitable way, Donalyn Miller has written another gorgeous book about relationships: relationships between teachers and children, relationships among children, and the intimate relationships wild readers have with books. She acknowledges the imperative of emotion and connection if we hope to engage students in reading that will impact their lives. Wild readers, she shows us, make time, assert choice, and find ‘comfort’ and ‘a center’ in books and conversation with each other. *Reading in the Wild* is brimming with children’s voices and practical solutions to common obstacles. Instead of leading us further into the wilderness, it orients our professional and ethical compass to a perfect true north.”

—Ellin Oliver Keene, staff developer, and author of *Talk About Understanding*

“Picking up where *The Book Whisperer* left off, *Reading in the Wild* extends the instructional conversation beyond the classroom to get students thinking about their reading lives outside the scaffolds we present during the school day. Straightforward, honest, and—above all—pragmatic, *Reading in the Wild* is as sensible as it is timely. Whether you’re a fan of *The Book Whisperer* or you’re just meeting Donalyn Miller through this newest book, you’ll find a motivating friend whose realistic, you-can-do-this voice is both thought provoking and refreshing at the same time.”

—Terry Thompson, instructional intervention teacher consultant, and author of *Adventures in Graphica: Using Comics and Graphic Novels to Teach Comprehension*

“This book is special. Miller puts into practice what she offers from the pulpit. It’s about connection, celebration, and choice. It’s about readers and books.”

—Paul W. Hankins, high school teacher, Silver Creek High School, West Clark Community Schools, Indiana

Reading
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A young child with short hair is sitting on the ground in a forest, leaning against a tree trunk and reading a book. The child is wearing a light-colored jacket. The background is a soft-focus forest with many trees and foliage.

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To Sarah, our wild reader. —D.M.

To Helena, Marisa, and Hazel. —S.K.

Foreword: Living the Wild Life of a Reader

THE SMARTEST ANSWER I ever heard to the question many authors face, “How long did it take you to write this book?” was this: “It took me all my life up to this point.” Yes, the physical act of putting words to paper might have occurred in a discrete period of time, but the heart of the book, the soul of the book, was a lifetime in the making. And so it is with Donalyn Miller’s remarkable *Reading in the Wild*. Donalyn brings together here her lifetime of reading, being a wild reader, being a member of various reading communities, and her passion for books and reading.

From the moment Donalyn began to talk about this book, the excitement has been there. I have watched eyes light up in a workshop as she talked about the concept that underpins *Reading in the Wild*. I saw firsthand how this idea resonated with educators. This idea of how we read when we are free to read is so essential, so basic, so fundamental that we have to ask, “Why has it not occurred to someone to write about it before now?” The answer is simple: this book is the product of Donalyn’s unique perspective. We first saw it

in *The Book Whisperer*—her approach to inspiring and igniting a passion for reading among her students. As Donalyn talked about her approach, heads of teachers nodded in agreement as if to say, *Well, of course. This makes sense.* More heads will nod in agreement as Donalyn takes us further into transforming students into lifelong readers, especially readers in the wild—those who read not because they must for some assignment but those who elect to share in this community of readers. Wild readers become part of the community of readers because reading is as important to them as eating and sleeping and breathing. Reading simply becomes one other activity in which they engage. They do so not only willingly, but enthusiastically.

How does Donalyn do this? How does she make it seem a foregone conclusion that reading in the wild should be the purpose of every classroom? She does this with a three-pronged approach. First, Donalyn *is* a wild reader. Ask anyone who knows her, who counts her as a colleague and friend. When you sit down to chat with her, the topic of books, reading, authors, and kids always comes into play. If you have followed her (along with Colby Sharp) on the monthly Twitter chat Titledtalk, you can witness the depth of her knowledge about books and reading. She is quick to point out titles and authors. And she is just as quick to jot down a book she does *not* know, adding it to her TBR (to be read) shelf or placing an order for the title so that she can add it to her stack. Her reading motivates others—including me—to accept challenges such as book-a-day or the book gap challenge (you can read about these in chapter 4).

It seems almost a no-brainer, but if our friends are wild readers, we tend to be wild readers as well. I have watched Donalyn talk to audiences about building a community of readers. Her talk is always peppered with suggestions about books, authors, series, and the like. The other wild readers in the room show themselves immediately. They are the head noddors who are jotting down titles when they are not nodding in agreement about an author or title Donalyn recommends. This plays out in the classroom as well. Students whose teachers are wild readers are more likely to see this as

something to aspire to. They are more likely to model themselves after their teacher. It is not surprising, then, to discover that the students in Donalyn's classes read dozens of books each year and participate fully in their reading community. As Katherine Mansfield observed, "The pleasure of all reading is doubled when one lives with another who shares the same books."

Being a wild reader is not enough for Donalyn. Educators must be able to point to the pedagogical underpinnings of classroom structures and activities. Thus, she takes us further in *Reading in the Wild* by providing the pedagogical base for her approach to developing a passion and love for reading in her students. She coalesces the research, current and historic, that points to the efficacy of what she does in a classroom. That research base is essential. Why is reading aloud important? Donalyn cites the research. How does offering students choice in reading materials work? She provides the research that explains why this is essential. Is it possible to encourage wild reading and still fulfill the demands of the curriculum that must be covered? Donalyn includes that in this book, too. At the very heart of *Reading in the Wild* is the research that underpins the entire focus: Donalyn's survey of hundreds of wild readers, asking them about the practices that helped form them as readers and keeps them active as readers.

Reading in the Wild is not a program, not a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction. By using broad statements about what wild readers do, Donalyn creates a classroom situation where individual teachers can develop their own forms, schedules, and materials. Although she includes forms and suggestions that educators will welcome, these are easily adjusted to individual needs, other grade levels, and other classes. The research is solid. The implementation is flexible. Have a class of tenth graders? Take the suggestions Donalyn makes about curating classroom libraries, building reading communities, and making reading plans and adjust them for older readers. In a fifth-grade classroom, adapt book sharing and conversations for younger students. Translating the actions of wild readers Donalyn discusses here to a different class or grade or age range is easily done.

Critical to this book are the stories from the trenches. Donalyn is not simply writing about what needs to be done in the classroom. Instead, the voices of students are at the heart of Donalyn's observations. All the wonderful ideas in the world are not worth time and effort without a sense of how this plays out in the classroom. Donalyn takes us into her classroom as kids make plans for vacation reading, set goals for the semester, read and record and reflect on their progress, and build their community of reading that extends past the four walls of the classroom and the school. Her kid-watching skills take us to the very core of wild reading and let us see how wild readers respond. Comments from her students pepper each chapter, providing educators with insight into just how wild readers respond to the activities, strategies, and structure of her classroom. Those voices of readers affirm what Donalyn discusses: given the proper classroom conditions, educators can help students grow from school time to lifetime readers, wild readers.

Ultimately, then, *Reading in the Wild* is about making connections. Think back to the connect-the-dot puzzles we loved as children. As we continued to move our pencils or crayons from dot to dot to dot, a picture emerged. And so it is with *Reading in the Wild*. As we move from chapter to chapter to chapter, the approach to fostering wild readers emerges. The connections we make between book and book, between reader and reader, and between book and reader are perhaps the most important connections we as educators can make. Helping students move from one book to the next and the next, especially helping them become more independent in the process, of knowing where to find more recommendations for books, ensures that their TBR lists and stacks of books grow, that a plan is in place. Assisting students in forging relationships among other readers ensures that students know that a community of readers is another constant in their lives as wild readers. Finally, helping readers connect to the books they are reading, making certain that the books are developmentally appropriate for the students and speak to the very hearts of the wild readers, affirms that the real purposes of reading include personal

connections—that books can touch us all deeply and elicit laughter, tears, and other reactions. These connections are part of the very heart of wild reading.

Donalyn reminds readers that books can transform lives. However, in order to do this, books have to be read. An old Buddhist proverb tells us, “If a seed of lettuce will not grow, we do not blame the lettuce. Instead, the fault lies with us for not having nourished the seed properly.” Here, then, is the secret to nourishing readers. Donalyn Miller’s *Reading in the Wild* is the tool teachers need for the proper nourishment of readers—the tool we need to make sure all our readers are wild readers.

Teri S. Lesesne

Professor at

Sam Houston State University

October 2013

Introduction

I have long been convinced that the central and most important goal of reading instruction is to foster a love of reading.

—Linda Gambrell,
“Creating Classroom Cultures
That Foster Reading Motivation”

IN THE FINAL CHAPTER of my first book, *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child* (Miller, 2009), I expressed dismay that although I had succeeded in encouraging my students to read a lot during our school year together, many of those students read less or stopped reading altogether when they moved into middle and high school. I blamed upper-level teachers and schools when my former students lost their reading motivation. I knew that given class reading time, the opportunity to choose their own books, and teachers who read and promoted books to them, the children would read. Clearly, it seemed to me, that if they stopped reading, it was because their teachers didn't provide a classroom environment that supported them. I expected teachers to take responsibility for students' reading.

Now I believe that while teachers can provide conditions for their students to develop lifelong reading habits, eventually students need to take responsibility for their reading lives. Reflecting on my own practices, which I outlined in *The Book Whisperer*, I see that our reading workshop classroom built an independent reading culture, but it seemed that some of my students were dependent, rather than independent, readers. When they left my classroom, many had not internalized the lifelong reading habits they needed in order to remain readers without daily support. If my students were truly independent readers, why did they still need a teacher to orchestrate their reading lives?

One student, Ashley, told me, “It is impossible to be a nonreader in your class, Mrs. Miller.” A few years ago, I would have taken pride in Ashley’s observation, but not now. I want my students to enjoy reading and find it meaningful when they are in my class, but I also want them to understand why reading matters to their lives. A reading workshop classroom provides a temporary scaffold, but eventually students must have self-efficacy and the tools they need to go it alone. The goal of all reading instruction is independence. If students remain dependent on teachers to remove all obstacles that prevent them from reading, they won’t become independent readers.

While students’ standardized test performance, fluency checks, and use of comprehension strategies indicated whether they mastered basic reading processes, none of the data tell me whether my students are readers beyond a school-based definition. I can prove students’ reading levels, I can prove whether they have mastered the reading standards I am required to teach, and I can prove their ability to read strategically. But I cannot prove whether my students will be avid readers in the future. And no one asks me to prove it.

When we teach and assess reading in our classrooms, we cannot overlook the emotional connections avid readers have for books and reading and the lifestyle behaviors that lifelong readers possess. (I shy away from the term *real readers* because it implies that students who read aren’t “real” readers.) Call it what you will—lifelong, avid, real, wild (my preference)—readers share an innate love of reading. In order to bridge the gap between a school-based definition of

readers and a real-world one, we must consider these affective qualities. The path to lifelong reading habits depends on internalizing a reading lifestyle along with reading skills and strategies. But are we identifying, modeling, and teaching these habits in the classroom? Can we as literacy professionals even agree on what the habits of lifelong readers are? And why is it so important?

Children who love reading and see themselves as readers are the most successful in school and have the greatest opportunities in life. The importance of lifelong reading habits is well documented. The 1996 *NAEP Report* (Allen, Carlson, & Zelenak, 2000), the only national measure we have in the United States that compares children across states (until Common Core State Standards testing kicks in) stresses the importance of lifelong reading habits: “Beyond the research and reform efforts in reading instruction, the development of lifelong literacy habits and abilities that are fostered through family and environmental support are of growing concern. More and more, educators and parents agree that students must not only develop the ability to comprehend what they read, but also develop an orientation to literacy that leads to lifelong reading and learning” (p. 100). In spite of intensive reform efforts to improve the reading skills of American students, the 2010 NAEP scores reveal little growth in this regard (Gewertz, 2010). There is little evidence that we are accomplishing the goal of instilling lifelong reading habits in classrooms.

While I was writing this book, almost every state adopted the Common Core State Standards—sweeping educational reform that promises to improve students’ reading achievement and ensure that schools throughout the country prepare every student for advanced education and the workforce. But this work was implemented without a single research study proving the effectiveness of the standards, and it ignores or blatantly dismisses decades of research in child development, educational psychology, and reading instruction. Whether the standards will improve students’ reading performance remains to be seen, but we cannot overlook one truth: no matter what standards we implement or reading tests we administer, children who read the most will always outperform children who don’t read much.

Our zealous national focus on standardized test performance, often at the expense of meaningful reading instruction and support, has caused us to lose sight of our true obligations regarding children's literacy: fostering their capacity to lead literate lives. We teach the skills that can be measured on multiple-choice tests and secretly hope that our students pick up along the way that reading is a worthwhile endeavor. We are teaching children to be test takers, yet we still aren't markedly improving their test scores. In 2002, the National Academies, a private, nonprofit quartet of institutions chartered by Congress to provide science, technology, and health policy advice, formed a panel composed of national experts in education, law, economics, and the social sciences in order to track the implementation and effectiveness of fifteen test-based incentive programs like merit pay. After ten years, the panel found few learning gains for students as a result of such programs (Sparks, 2011). We are not creating resilient, self-possessed readers who can travel on to the next school year, and the next, and into adulthood with reading behaviors and a love of reading that will serve them throughout their lives.

Readers are also more likely to succeed in the workforce. Researcher Mark Taylor, from the University of Oxford, surveyed 17,200 people born in 1970 about their extracurricular activities at age sixteen and their careers at age thirty-three. He found that "reading books is the only out-of-school activity for 16-year-olds that is linked to getting a managerial or professional job in later life." Reading was linked to a higher chance of attending college, too. No other activity, including sports, attending concerts, visiting museums, or practical activities like cooking and sewing, were found to have the same effect. Reflecting on the survey findings, Taylor said, "According to our results there is something special about reading for pleasure. The positive associations of reading for pleasure aren't replicated in any other extra-curricular activity, regardless of our expectations." When we consider that adults who read have access to better job prospects, fostering wild reading habits in our students appears vital to ensuring their college and career readiness (University of Oxford, 2011).

Failing to graduate a populace that values reading has long-term consequences for everyone. The 2007 National Endowment for the Arts report, “To Read or Not to Read,” found that “regular reading not only boosts the likelihood of an individual’s academic and economic success—facts that are not especially surprising—but it also seems to awaken a person’s social and civic sense” (Iyengar & Ball, 2007). Adults who consider themselves readers vote in elections, volunteer for charities, and support the arts in greater numbers than their peers who read less. Clearly, developing lifelong reading habits matters not only to the individual but to society in general. We all benefit when more people read.

And yet there is debate about whether we can teach students to become lifelong readers at all. According to Alan Jacobs, Distinguished Professor of Humanities at Baylor College, you can’t. In his book *The Pleasure of Reading in an Age of Distraction* (2011), Jacobs claims that “the idea that many teachers hold today, that one of the purposes of education is to teach students to love reading—or at least appreciate and enjoy whole books—is largely alien to the history of education. And perhaps alien to the history of reading as well” (p. 113). Some children fall in love with reading, and some don’t. Our charge as teachers, some educators claim, is to ensure that our students have at least the minimal literacy skills they need to function in society. This philosophy, however, is a cop-out and reduces opportunities for our students for the rest of their lives.

If readers have the edge academically, professionally, and socially, we limit our students’ potential when we decide that lifelong reading habits are not within our abilities to teach or children’s abilities to learn. By believing that only some of our students will ever develop a love of books and reading, we ignore those who do not fall into books and reading on their own. We renege on our responsibility to teach students how to become self-actualized readers. We are selling our students short by believing that reading is a talent and that lifelong reading behaviors cannot be taught. I don’t subscribe to the belief that avid readers are born and not made or that reading teachers carry no responsibility for

creating wild readers. This is, in fact, something I addressed head-on in *The Book Whisperer*.

Even schools and classrooms that embrace independent reading often see it as nothing more than an inroad to improving students' test scores. The value of lifelong reading habits to the individual or society is rarely discussed or considered important. Planned, explicit conversations that model and teach students how to develop reading lives seldom take place. But I believe that they should and that instilling lifelong reading habits in children should be our primary goal as reading teachers.

I asked Susan Kelley to join me in writing this book. Susie has taught reading for over thirty years, and her experiences, thoughtful teaching practices, and continued passion for teaching add an important and necessary voice to this conversation. For every teacher who believes that change is no longer possible, who counts the days until retirement because teaching has radically changed, Susie stands as living proof that veteran teachers continue to evolve in their understanding of children and teaching.

Susie and I want our students to love reading, and we constantly reflect on how our instruction, classroom management, and assessments lead students toward lifelong reading habits and self-efficacy as readers. How do we measure this agency? How do we prove to an administrator, or parent, or even ourselves that we are fostering lifelong reading behaviors in our students? How do we set up a classroom that provides optimal conditions for these habits to develop?

We began with our primary question, "What are the habits of lifelong readers anyway?" Examining our own reading behaviors and the reading behaviors of our students provided some insight. In order to validate our beliefs about the reading habits of lifelong readers, we surveyed over eight hundred adult readers through our online Wild Reader Survey (the survey is in appendix D). In the same way that thoughtful researchers and teachers deconstructed reading comprehension, we sought to unpack readers' lifelong reading habits.

Our Wild Reader Survey respondents provided an operational definition of a reader through their daily habits and thoughts about reading. Through these responses, Susie and I identified five general characteristics that lifelong readers share. This list of habits guided us toward further inquiry, reflective practice, and action research in our classrooms over the next two years. Taking a critical look at our own teaching practices, Susie and I determined what instructional components exist in our classrooms to support students as they develop these qualities and identified how our practices could improve. From lesson design, to classroom management strategies, to formative assessments, we reconsidered every aspect of our instruction with the goal of nurturing these wild reader characteristics in our students. We talked, argued (not much, really), drew big plans on our whiteboards, listened to our students, and tried and retried techniques in our classrooms.

This book offers the results of that work and our journey to reposition our reading instruction around the habits and attitudes of lifelong readers. We include every tool we created, our students' responses, and our reflections about how our discoveries shaped our practices. Each chapter of *Reading in the Wild* focuses on a single characteristic of lifelong readers.

We found that wild readers:

1. *Dedicate time to read.* They spend substantial time reading in spite of their hectic lives. In chapter 1, we share methods for increasing students' reading time both inside and outside school and provide suggestions for working with students who don't spend much time reading.
2. *Self-select reading material.* They are confident when selecting books to read and have the experience and skills to choose books successfully that meet their interests, needs, and reading abilities. In chapter 2, we demonstrate how to build this reading confidence and experience in children and teach students how to choose their own books. Because

access to books is a vital component in providing students choices in appropriate reading material, we include tips for creating, curating, and using a classroom library to foster more reading.

3. *Share books and reading with other readers.* Readers enjoy talking about books almost as much as they like reading. Reading communities provide a peer group of other readers who challenge and support us. In chapter 3, we describe the importance of reading communities to readers and offer suggestions for creating and sustaining a positive reading culture in your classroom.
4. *Have reading plans.* Wild readers plan to read beyond their current book. We anticipate new books by favorite authors or the next installment in a beloved series. We know what we plan to read next and why we want to read it. In chapter 4, we describe how to teach children to make their own reading plans and provide suggestions for increasing your knowledge of children's literature.
5. *Show preferences for genres, authors, and topics.* While we agree that children need to read widely and experience a wide range of texts as part of their literacy educations, we realize that wild readers often express strong preferences in the material they choose to read. In chapter 5, we reveal how to validate students' reading preferences, challenge them to expand their reading horizons, and work with students who seem to be in a reading rut or require additional challenge.

Throughout the book, we share the words of our students and the wild readers we surveyed, which give powerful insight into the experiences and skills that support their reading lives.

We believe that teaching our students to be wild readers is not only possible; it is our ethical responsibility as reading teachers and lifelong readers. Our students deserve it, society demands it, and our teaching hearts know that it matters.

How Reading in the Wild Is Organized

Each chapter of *Reading in the Wild* focuses on one of five lifelong reading habits. Although the wild readers we surveyed exhibited a wide range of reading behaviors, Susie and I selected five habits that most readers exhibited that also transferred well to classroom instruction. In each chapter you will find:

- *Community Conversations*: These conversations describe the minilessons we taught our students that focus on aspects of wild reading habits. Each minilesson features a modeling piece, classroom discussion, student practice, and reflection.
- *Conferring Points*: Conferring is the backbone of reading and writing workshop because conferences provide individualized support, relationship building, and assessment opportunities. Each conferring point addresses common concerns observed in workshop classrooms and offers student examples and assessment tools for conferring about wild reading habits.
- *Keeping Track of Your Reading Life*: Students document their reading habits throughout the school year using their readers' notebooks. In this section, we examine components of the reader's notebook that reinforce wild reading habits, describing how each tool holds students accountable for their reading and provides reflection and planning opportunities for both readers and teachers.

In between each chapter are essays on topics of interest that relate to wild reading in the classroom. These essays take a deeper look at some classroom management aspects of reading workshop or explore specific themes in greater detail.

The appendices at the back of the book contain blank copies of all of the forms mentioned in this book and a list of my students' favorite books. I have also included these forms and list at www.slideshare.net/donalynm.

Classroom Nonnegotiables

Susie and I depend on a few classroom nonnegotiables built on a framework of fundamental workshop model components that exist every day throughout the school year. Lesson planning, assessment, resources, classroom management—we check every aspect of our instructional design against these core values. I discussed each one of these foundational elements in *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*, and it is not my intent to revisit these concepts in detail here. Rest assured that these components remain in place as vital elements of our classroom reading (and writing) workshops. Our classroom nonnegotiables are these:

- *Time to read: Students need time to read and write.* Our students spend a significant amount of time reading in class—approximately one-third of every class period. During this daily independent reading time, Susie and I confer with several students about their reading and meet with small groups of students who need additional instruction and support. We encourage students to read at home and remove or reduce homework and busy-work activities in order to provide time for additional reading.
- *Choice: Students need to make their own choices about reading material and writing topics.* Students self-select all books for independent reading. Susie and I expect them to read widely—selecting books from a variety of genres and formats including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and graphic novels. We support and challenge our students through reading advisory, guiding them toward books that match their interests and reading abilities.
- *Response: Students need the opportunity to respond in natural ways to the books they read and the pieces they write.* Susie and I provide students with daily opportunities to respond to what they read. Students share book recommendations, write response

entries, and post book reviews based on their independent reading. They talk about books daily with their peers and us through conferences and classroom discussions.

- *Community: Students need to feel that they are part of a community of readers and writers.* Students develop confidence and self-efficacy as readers through their relationships with other readers in reading communities that include both their peers and teacher. Whether students read below grade level, meet grade-level goals, or surpass grade-level expectations, all of them fully participate in activities and conversations that value individual strengths and viewpoints. Both Susie and I read avidly and share our love for reading every day with our students. We are the lead readers in our classrooms and model a reading life for students.
- *Structure: The workshop rests on a structure of predictable rituals and procedures that support the students and teacher.* Reading workshop follows a consistent routine of lessons; whole class, small group, and independent reading activities; and time for sharing and reflection. Regular conferences, reading response, and reader's notebook records hold students accountable for their reading and provide information about their progress toward personal and academic reading goals.

While these foundational workshop principles provide our students with a scaffold for developing lifelong reading habits, Susie and I realize that our students need more direct instruction in lifelong reading behaviors and deeper reflection about their progress toward developing these habits. Even the best classroom reading communities are temporary homes in our students' lives. In their brief time with us, we must explicitly teach them how to become wild readers.

