

# Making Thinking Visible: Explicit, Transferable Literacy Practices Across the Curriculum

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## ABSTRACT

This editorial article introduces the Fall 2025 issue of the *Georgia Journal of Literacy*, which is themed "Making Thinking Visible: Explicit, Transferable Literacy Practices Across the Curriculum." With AI writing on the rise, new standards, and continued emphasis on science-based reading instruction, teachers are being called on to both teach structured literacy skills and the thinking that drives them. The four articles in this issue show how systematic, explicit, evidence-based instruction, along with modeling metacognition and culturally responsive teaching, can help students make learning visible and transferable across content areas. From reimagining grammar instruction for digital-age learners, to coupling structured literacy with metacognition, to bridging math and storytelling, and using mentor texts to cultivate writing craft, each article highlights how modeling cognitive processes transforms students into strategic, reflective thinkers. The articles here collectively call for literacy instruction that connects creativity, clarity, and structure with equity and thinking with doing.

## KEYWORDS

literacy  
instruction;  
metacognition;  
explicit teaching;  
grammar;  
structured  
literacy;  
interdisciplinary  
learning;  
culturally  
responsive  
pedagogy; writing  
instruction

In traditional face-to-face and virtual classrooms, students are surrounded by language, yet they are often disconnected from how language works on a practical level. Between texting shorthand, AI-generative writing, and new ELA standards, the act of thinking about thinking (metacognition) has never been more important. This Fall 2025 issue of the *Georgia Journal of Literacy* comes at a vital time. Themed "Making Thinking Visible: Explicit, Transferable Literacy Practices Across the Curriculum," the authors published in this issue demonstrate how explicit instruction, purposeful modeling, and asset-based instruction can help learners read and write but also understand and appreciate the metacognition behind those language acts.

## Why "Making Thinking Visible" Matters Now

For decades, literacy education has oscillated between explicit content-focused instruction and constructive, student-centered learning, between correctness and creative freedom. Twenty-five years into the 21st century now, students find themselves needing to master content and build critical thinking skills. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools, new state standards (such as Georgia's new ELA standards), and renewed attention on scientifically validated reading instruction have placed a growing spotlight on metacognition, the ability to understand and monitor one's own thinking and learning (Grote-Garcia et al., 2025; Kalantzis & Cope, 2025). When teachers model how to think and how to think about thinking, students gain agency across subjects (Ghimire &

Mokhtari, 2025). They begin to see language, including the syntax or grammar of language, as meaning-making, comprehension as strategic thinking, and mathematics as storytelling. Each of the four articles in this issue highlights the shift toward visibility, toward instruction that makes the invisible processes of literacy explicit, transferable, and equitable.

### **Grammar as Understanding, Not Correction**

In “‘Not Just for the Boomers’: The Importance of Grammatical Understandings in 21st Century P–20 Classrooms,” Dr. Vicki Luther and Dr. Matt Sroka revisit a topic many educators are hesitant to tackle: grammar instruction. They trace how grammar fell out of favor after the 1963 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) report and argue for its return through student-centered, explicit, structured literacy teaching. Their literature review positions grammar within the generative AI and digital communication setting, showing that while it can autocorrect, technology cannot teach intentionality or metacognitive awareness. Luther and Sroka call on educators to balance descriptive and prescriptive grammar instruction to honor both “correctness” or precision and linguistic diversity and to prepare preservice teachers to do the same. Their findings emphasize that meaningful grammar instruction depends on connection, clarity, and cognitive control, not on surface-level error marking.

### **Thinking Aloud as Equity**

Dr. Sarah Sharpe’s practitioner article, “Teaching Thinking for Reading: Merging Executive Function, Structured Literacy, and Asset-Based Practices,” extends this visibility into comprehension instruction. Based on the science of learning and reading, Sharpe maintains decoding is the starting point, but comprehension is the goal, and it depends on deliberate thinking. Her Culturally Responsive Think-Aloud Instructional Model (CRTAIM) demonstrates how teachers can make invisible cognitive processes, such as inferring, predicting, and monitoring, visible through explicit modeling and culturally responsive teaching. By bringing students’ linguistic and cultural assets into structured literacy instruction, Sharpe shows how to transform comprehension instruction from a skill set into an act of empowerment and equity building.

### **Storytelling as Mathematical Reasoning**

Two Teaching Tips pieces constitute the final section of this issue, the first of which is whimsical in title but highly practical in function. Few pairings seem as delightful (or unlikely) as dragons, tacos, and numeracy. Yet in “Beyond Fire and Tacos: Using *Dragons Love Tacos* to Ignite Mathematical Thinking through Interdisciplinary Read-Alouds,” Dr. Luminita Hartle shows how teachers can utilize children’s literature as a springboard for understanding mathematics. Hartle’s work with teacher candidates using tactile manipulatives along with engaging picturebooks and a little humor can make math concrete, visible, and culturally relevant. Her interdisciplinary strategy merges narrative and problem-solving and invites learners to explore math concepts such as addition, graphing, and pattern recognition through shared experiences. Math, Hartle reminds us, lives in conversation, not isolation, with cultural stories and joy.

### **Writing as Imitation and Insight**

Finally, in “Mentor Texts as a Bridge to Independent Writing: Supporting Young Writers Through Sentence Imitation and Craft Study in the Elementary Classroom,” Dr. Jolene Reed and Dr. Melinda Miller bring us back to the sentence itself. Using the sentence-composing approach of

Don and Jenny Killgallon, they illustrate how imitation, long dismissed as rote, can instead serve as a scaffold for authentic writing. Through gradual release with explicit modeling, students internalize writing skills, such as narrative leads and parallelism. Reed and Miller posit that when young writers study the sentences of master writers, they can begin to think and write like them. Imitation becomes an act of insight that leads to the development of writing skills and proficiency.

### Looking Ahead: From Mechanics to Metacognition

Across these four articles, a theme emerges: visible thinking leads to transferable learning. Whether through grammar, comprehension, math, or writing, each author reinforces the importance of explicit instruction accompanied by deliberate modeling of the cognitive, linguistic, and creative work that learning requires. With information overload and increased automation, the practices and strategies showcased in this issue remind us that *human* teaching still matters. Our role as literacy teachers and advocates is not merely to deliver “correct” content but to model curiosity and the joy of learning. As you read this issue, consider how “making thinking visible” appears in your own work. How could you model the metacognitive habits you want your students to develop by revising in real time or life experience or pausing to wonder during a read-aloud? Principally, literacy is the connective tissue and foundation for all learning and subject areas, not just language arts.

The editors and reviewers of the *Georgia Journal of Literacy* invite you to continue this conversation by submitting research or practitioner pieces or even teaching tips for the next year’s Spring 2026 issue. We encourage researchers, teacher educators, literacy advocates, and even PK–12 teachers and school leaders across Georgia and beyond to submit manuscripts that question and expand how we teach students to read critically and write purposely. After all, when we make thinking visible, we make learning and literacy growth possible and lasting for *all* learners.

### References

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