



# Reading Against Democracy: The Broken Promises of Reading Instruction

*Patrick Shannon*

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*Thoughtful teachers, chafing at restrictions and mandates, are asking themselves, "How did it come to this?" Patrick Shannon's book provides fascinating, thoroughly-researched answers, with an empowering perspective and a hopeful path out of this current nonsense.*

**- Randy and Katherine Bomer**  
Authors of *For a Better World*

*Education is not a disinterested process, nor does it foster many innocent bystanders or casual observers. Pat helps us understand the players, the policies and the programs that influence classroom practices, research agendas, and literacy assessments, and provides the "big picture" of literacy education that enables us to comprehend today's educational landscape.*

**- Frank Serafini**  
Author of *Lessons in Comprehension*

*This book is certain to inspire educators who are discouraged by recent developments to continue their work for equity, humanity, and social justice in our schools. It reminds us that we do not stand alone, but that there are, and there will continue to be, scores of dedicated educators seeking humane and thoughtful ways of helping children to learn.*

**- Catherine Compton-Lilly**  
Author of *Confronting, Racism, Poverty, and Power*

Patrick Shannon's *Broken Promises* was hailed by *Language Arts* as one of nine seminal references on literacy and inequality in education. But so much has changed, and worsened, since its publication that instead of revising his classic Shannon has written an almost entirely new book. The result, *Reading Against Democracy*, is Shannon's fully documented, up to date, and utterly convincing look at how businesses and political interests broke the promise that American education would teach students how to think, read, and write as citizens.

Shannon describes how business, government, and educational experts have consistently trumped the civic rationales for education with the economic. He explains how attempts to make instructional outcomes more predictable for business have led to a curricular formula that serves American students poorly at home as well as, ironically, in the global economy.

Think the goal of America's schools is to immerse students in literate behaviors so they can participate in America's rich democratic tradition? Think again. *Reading Against Democracy* is the book that lays out the whole story of where literacy education has gone wrong, where it's headed, and what steps we can take to make sure our children are educated like people, not trained like employees.

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