

LITERACY LETTER

JUNE 2007

LITERACY COUNCIL OF LAPORTE COUNTY... WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The LCLC gave away books in Spanish to children at the 1st Annual Cinco de Mayo event in Michigan City on May 5, 2007.
- The Executive Spelling Bee was a HUGE success as both a fundraiser and a networking activity for the Council.

“Reading Is A Lifelong Commitment.”

We are committed to that vision.

The Literacy Council of LaPorte County includes literacy providers committed to giving all children and adults an opportunity to improve reading and writing skills. Our programs start with newborns and continue on through adulthood.

Our mission is to partner within the community to help all citizens achieve their full potential through literacy. Our vision is to attain 100% literacy in our communities.

Our members include Michigan City Adult Education (16 years +), Baby Talk (0-3 years), Even Start Family Literacy (13-19 years), Dunebrook (0+ years), H.O.P.E. Cultural Center for Social and Economic Growth (6+ years), LaPorte Family YMCA (0-18 years), Michigan City Public Library (7+ years), Read LaPorte County, Inc. (0+ years), Reading is Fundamental (7-10 years), and Safe Harbor (5-11 years.)

Our Council Partners include Barker Woods

Enrichment Center, Communities in Schools, Healthy Communities of LaPorte County, Ivy Tech State College, LaPorte Community School Corporation, LaPorte County Public Library, Purdue North Central, The Discovery Alliance, Unity Foundation of LaPorte County, and the Office of the Mayor/Michigan City.

To become a volunteer tutor, please call us at 219/362-6260 or send email to info@lpliteracycouncil.com

LITERACY COUNCIL IS ONLINE

If you're not already on it, our new website can be found at www.lpliteracycouncil.com.

On the site, you'll find links to all Council member organizations, email addresses and phone numbers for ease in contacting literacy professionals, and links to many interest-

ing websites that are dedicated to literacy.

In future months, you'll find photos of Council events and activities as well as updated Calendar of Events and much more.

If you have information about your organization's literacy

efforts that you'd like to promote through the website, send information to info@lpliteracycouncil.com.

ADOLESCENT LITERACY PROGRAMS

Many middle and high school students struggle to learn in their content area classes because they cannot understand the required texts and express their understanding in writing and discussion. These students are at risk for school failure and require instructional support for accelerating their literacy. Districts, schools, teachers, and parents recognize this problem, and national panels and policy makers are discussing it in reports such as Reading for Understanding, Reading Next, and Adolescents and Literacy: Reading for the 21st Century.

Fortunately, a number of programs are responding to adolescent literacy needs. Educators need to know where these programs are, what they provide, how they work, and how to choose among them. For background information, view a [Webcast on Adolescent Literacy Programs](#).

This section of Literacy Matters provides you with up-to-date and practical information about several current adoles-

cent literacy programs. The programs described here include:

- [America's Choice Ramp-Up Literacy](#)
- [Read 180](#)
- [Springboard™](#)
- [Supported Literacy™](#)
- [Strategic Instruction Model](#)
- [The Strategic Literacy Initiative](#)
- [Reading Is FAME®](#)

As you browse among these programs and websites, use the following questions to guide your school discussions about program support for your students:

- What are our school goals and district standards for literacy? (e.g., literal comprehension? Understanding content texts? Communicating understanding in writing? Engaging in cooperative learning? Communicating ideas orally with peers?)
- What do we know about our students' literacy

strengths and weaknesses? How are students performing in writing as well as reading assessment?

- What kinds of literacy instruction do different students need? Will all benefit from the same kind of support?
- What are the roles of faculty and school leaders in improving adolescent literacy? What professional development support do teachers and school leaders need?

You may also want to consult the [SEDL](#) website for information about additional programs. <http://www.sedl.org/cgi-bin/mysql/buildingreading.cgi?showre-cord=18&l=description%20>



“We have ignored cultural literacy in thinking about education. We ignore the air we breathe until it is thin or foul. Cultural literacy is the oxygen of social intercourse.”

- E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

**Read 15 minutes
every day.**

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FAMILY LITERACY

Save the Date!
17th Annual National Conference on Family Literacy
March 30 – April 1,
2008 • Louisville, Kentucky

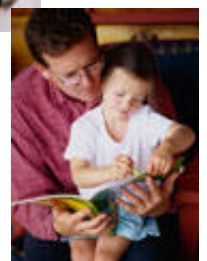
Don't miss the premier conference for education professionals who work with families.

No other conference brings together leaders in adult education, English as a Second Language, early literacy, reading, parent involvement, community initiatives, research and policy to advance the well-being of families through literacy.

For questions about the National Conference on

Family Literacy, please e-mail [confer-
ence@familit.org](mailto:conference@familit.org).

The new brochure for this conference is not yet available. Check back at www.familit.org in coming months for the March 2008 conference.



THE LITERACY PROJECT

If you haven't already visited www.google.com/literacy/ you'll want to do so soon.

This site boasts a major database of resources for teachers, literacy organizations, and anyone interested in reading and education.

You'll find links to books, scholarly articles on a number of related topics, literacy videos, a literacy map, literacy blogs, book clubs and groups, and an entire literacy search that is very targeted.

If you're writing a grant and need stats on anything related to literacy, this is the place to visit first.

Perhaps most importantly, there is a "tell us" link where you can send information on what your organization is doing for literacy.



WWW.HEALTHLITERACY.COM

Health Literacy Consulting helps individuals and organizations communicate health information in ways patients, families, and employees can understand. It does so through a range of services, products, and resources. These include:

- [Free monthly e-newsletter](#)
- [Workshops and keynote presentations](#)
- [Plain language writing and editing services](#)
- [Health literacy tips, arti-](#)

[cles](#), [books](#), and [audio CDs](#)

- [Health Literacy Month website](#)

- [Health Literacy World Tour 2008](#)

[Helen Osborne, M.Ed., OTR/L](#) is the founder and president of Health Literacy Consulting based in Natick, Massachusetts. She is also the founding director of Health Literacy Month – a worldwide campaign to raise awareness about the importance of understandable health information.

Recognized as a health literacy expert, Helen brings her clinical experience, educational training, and patient perspective to all her work. Helen's award-winning book, *Health Literacy from A to Z: Practical Ways to Communicate Your Health Message* is considered by many as the most important health literacy reference today.

“No skill is more crucial to the future of a child, or to a democratic and prosperous society, than literacy.”

- Los Angeles Times,

“A Child Literacy Initiative for the Greater Los Angeles Area”

WWW.LITERACYCENTER.NET

If you are a parent or educator who wishes to teach literacy skills in English, Spanish, German and/or French, this is most definitely the site for you.

Choose from colors, letters, numbers, phonemes, shapes, writing or words...and you'll discover an awesome tool for teaching literacy skills to new

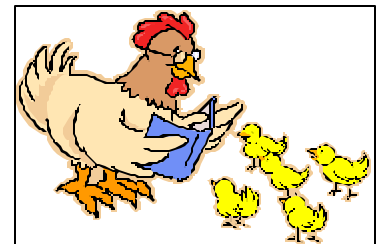
literacy students. These are the basics. Called “Play and Learn,” this site is colorful, expressive, and guaranteed to hold the attention of your student.

Parents and teachers can choose, in color activities for example, color recognition, matching and concentration...in all four languages. In

the Phoneme Center, you'll find rhyming, poetry, vowel recognition and music.

And the best part? It's all free.

Pass this site onto your staff and your families...they'll appreciate the information.



Are we successfully being the example to the children and families with whom we work...and live? Do YOU read 15 minutes a day—non-work reading? Do you use your library card enough? Do you read to your children...your spouse? Your elderly parents? Do you always have a book with you?

LITERACY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by Denise A. Yess

When I began my journey—more than 30 years ago—as a speech-language pathologist in the public schools, I had a "traditional" role providing services in the areas of articulation, language processing, oral expressive language, fluency, and voice. My caseload was a "pull-out" model and I covered four different schools ranging from pre-K through 12th grade.

Because I had to cover so many schools weekly and such a broad range of ages, I had limited contact with my professional colleagues both in regular education and in special needs. I practiced a clinical model that was not connected to the student's curriculum. I primarily assessed the various speech-language areas and then either purchased or developed materials to directly intervene.

My Venture Into Literacy

My venture into the realm of literacy only began to evolve several years ago, when I started attending Emerson College's annual Summer Language Learning Institute in Boston. Thanks to the foresight of people such as Geraldine Wallach and Anthony Bashir, who were responsible for initiating and maintaining this summer learning institute, a whole new world opened up for me, focusing on the connection between language and literacy. Many notable guest lecturers came each year and spent a day or part of a day with us, exposing us to all aspects of literacy and how it related to the language training that we all had acquired through past education.

During this period, a new philosophy of teaching also was being introduced—the "inclusion" or "push-in" method of working with children with special needs. I began attending courses and workshops with my regular and special education colleagues in this area. From there, I started working with two third-grade teachers and one special education teacher using a push-in model of instruction for the children with special needs in each of their rooms.

I took this opportunity to introduce a variety of language/literacy strategies that I had learned at Emerson. For example, through the institute, I learned new methods for mapping/graphic organizing to improve and expand vocabulary and comprehension of content areas. Written language also was addressed with a variety of new approaches. (If you are interested in any of these areas, you can contact me by email or by becoming an affiliate of Division 16, School-Based

Issues.) I took additional special education and regular education courses related to reading and writing. I became certified in specific multi-sensory reading approaches as well. Of course, I sought out printed material on the topic of literacy and voraciously read from these sources. I obtained further information from professional listservs, such as those offered by Special Interest Division 1, Language Learning and Education and now also by Division 16. (See special interest division column on page 17.)

My increasing knowledge in the area of literacy made me a credible resource for the public school system where I was working. Initially, teachers would ask to consult with me regarding their students with learning disabilities. Then, teachers started to ask me to come into their classrooms and model or co-teach. I was asked by administrators and parent groups to offer in-services in literacy areas demonstrating how language has a direct impact on the reading/writing process.

You might wonder how I could do this when I was traveling to four schools. I couldn't. Because what I was teaching to staff and children proved so effective and because of the increased complexity and intensity of my caseload, my administrators began to hire more SLPs to cover the different grade levels. My school system went from having 1.5 SLPs to two full-time and three part-time clinicians to cover various ages and grade levels. I ultimately was assigned to one primary elementary school, covering grades K–3. Soon an SLP was hired to work with the preschool population in our town and some of the kindergartners in this school.

The reduction in the number of my schools and in my caseload has allowed me to comprehensively learn the K–3 curriculum needs and to collaborate more effectively with my colleagues at this level. I now am able to work intensely with the more significantly involved children on my caseload.

Although all of this may appear idyllic, even now I encounter roadblocks from new administrators with a strictly clinical perception of the SLP's role in the public schools, and from new staff who may not welcome this more collaborative model. It is not a perfect world. However, I would never exchange this newer method for the one commonly used in my earlier years in the public schools. The efficacy of the new approach, for me, far outweighs any negative aspects, such as lack of understanding of the complexity of the SLP's role by new administration or faculty.

New Roles

The unique position I now fill in my school system has allowed me the luxury of performing most of the "Suggested Roles and Responsibilities for Speech-Language Pathologists With Respect to Reading and Writing" outlined in the ASHA document (2001):

- preventing written language problems by fostering language acquisition and emergent literacy
- identifying children at risk for reading and writing problems
- assessing reading and writing
- providing intervention and documenting outcomes for reading and writing
- assuming other roles, such as providing assistance to general education teachers, parents, and students; advocating for effective literacy practices; and advancing the knowledge base

Many of the above areas overlap. To illustrate, I will walk you through some of the various partnerships and collaborative roles I have assumed. While I acknowledge that all settings are unique and that many SLPs may not be able to incorporate all of the suggested roles, they will certainly be able to use some of the suggestions. I am a firm believer that the public school's primary job is to create literate individuals. As SLPs, using all our tools and knowledge, we must join forces in assisting even our neediest children to obtain some form of literacy, depending on the individual's cognitive and language abilities.

To start with, I am one of the key members of our school's Child Study Team, which serves to initially review children who are at risk. We develop an intervention plan to be implemented for a period of 6–8 weeks. My role may be as a consultant or as part of the intervention team. At the end of the trial period, the Child Study Team reconvenes for further assessment and to determine future needs.

I also have played the role of mentor for our kindergarten teacher who works with these children. I trained and provided the teacher with basic assessment tools for phonological and other pre-literacy skills. The children to be seen were selected by each classroom teacher as well as from results of the initial kindergarten screening. I supplied the teacher with all materials and consulted on specific approaches throughout the year. I modeled various approaches that would best suit the individual needs of the children she

LITERACY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)

served. I am delighted to report that most of the children achieved the necessary emergent literacy skills for reading and writing acquisition by the end of kindergarten as indicated by pre- and post-testing performed on each child.

In the later grades, I have collaborated with our Title I reading specialist who works solely with the at-risk population as well. We have mutually run in-services for our faculty on phonological skills development. We have shared various assessment tools and materials. She and I obtained a literacy grant to work on developing various reading fluency strategies during the summer of 2002 and into the 2003 school year. In this way, we are pursuing another role of advocating for more effective literacy practices.

I have performed various reading and writing assessments as part of the evaluation process and have incorporated literacy assessment into my general speech-language battery. The assessment tools vary depending on the individual child's profile that has been developed in collaboration with other specialists' assessment measures.

Knowledge and training in each other's assessment tools is beneficial, especially when collaboration of needs and services is desired. I recommend that members of our profession become trained in a variety of literacy assessments.

Strategies and Techniques

In providing intervention and documenting outcomes for both the reading and writing process, I use both a push-in as well as a pull-out model, depending on the specific needs of the individual child. Even with articulation cases, I pull in literacy. For example, I may use classroom texts or writing tasks to reinforce specific sounds or to improve co-articulation of speech.

For both receptive and expressive language intervention, I use the child's classroom materials. I may use a variety of different strategies or scaffolding techniques, but my focus will be on the curriculum the child needs to comprehend and communicate within the classroom. Often, I will demonstrate certain strategies or techniques to the whole class. For example, I demonstrate my own version of a "Story Glove" that visually and kinesthetically indicates key parts of a story. All the children then wear one of their own, first orally retelling and then retelling in written form. Prior to the "whole-class" demonstrations, I taught the strategy to my LLD students. Consequently, these children became more successful when they were later included with their classmates during whole-

class demonstrations.

For the benefit of those children with significant reading/writing deficits, I work as an integral part of a collaborative team of classroom and special education staff incorporating a variety of language/literacy strategies. A few of these children demonstrate significant short-term memory and retrieval difficulties as well as poor phonological and visual-sequential skills. As a team, we plan how each member can remediate the deficit areas, always attempting to address the same areas in a cohesive manner but with a different focus, according to our individual professional specialty.

For example, if the child manifested a significant memory and retrieval problem, I incorporate various language strategies while working directly on the child's reading or writing. I might use a kinesthetic approach during teaching of initial blends, having the child hold different colored marbles while saying and then writing. For word retrieval, I might incorporate traditional retrieval strategies along with various fluency drills. Using computer programs and other technology, I have experimented with developing different reading fluency drills based in the reading curriculum of the child.

I have been most fortunate to serve as a language/literacy consultant for our curriculum coordinator. This has enabled me to play a role in the development of our school's literacy programs. Our curriculum coordinator has been wonderful in ensuring that our entire staff receives the same basic training in specific, research-based literacy approaches. All of this training has been offered through various grants that the town received.

The Odyssey Continues

My odyssey into literacy has been long and enlightening. Although I feel that I have acquired a solid foundation in language/literacy, my journey is far from complete. There is still so much to learn and so much more that requires in-depth research and experimentation. The reading/writing process is truly a complicated cognitive activity requiring many integrative skills. Because each child is unique, one must pull from a variety of "tools" when addressing the individual child's literacy needs. It is a daunting task. However, I can think of nothing more rewarding than to witness a child finally "breaking the code" and becoming a more literate individual, knowing that I played an essential role in the process.

Participating in a literacy team is not an easy task. One must first develop the necessary credibility, which takes time and training. Perhaps university settings will start incorporating literacy training into

the core speech-language curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels of study.

ASHA has been very supportive in promoting literacy these past years. One needs only to go to the ASHA Web site to start on this odyssey toward literacy expertise. We are truly fortunate that ASHA decided to make one of its focused initiatives a school-focused goal incorporating literacy exposure and training. Our schools conferences provide wonderful examples of the offerings of our national organization.

There could be no better time for the SLP to jump on the literacy bandwagon. Even President Bush is promoting a huge literacy initiative. In order to promote our profession within the public school sector and become valuable members of the educational setting, we have no choice but to embrace literacy. To do so will promote our professional status and visibility. But most importantly, our embrace of literacy will greatly enhance the opportunities of our children with language impairments as well as positively affect the general school population.

Denise Yess has worked both in the private sector and in the schools with populations from pre-K through geriatric. She is on the Steering Committee of Special Interest Division 16. Contact her by email at yess@attbi.com.

For Further Reading

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists With Respect to Reading and Writing in Children and Adolescents: Position Statement. Online Desk Reference .

Ehren, B. J. (2000). Maintaining a therapeutic focus and sharing responsibility for student success: Keys to in-classroom speech-language services. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 31, 219-229.

Ehren, B. J., & Ehren, T. C. (2001). New or expanded literacy roles for speech-language pathologists. Making it happen in the schools. *Seminars in Speech and Language*, 22, 233-243.

Moats, L. C. (1999). Teaching reading IS rocket science. American Federation of Teachers-AFL-CIO Web site: www.nichd.nih.gov/crmc/cdb/reading.htm#cpc.

www.lpliteracycouncil.com

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WEBSITES

America Reads: What Educators Can Do

http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/educators_cando.html

Reading Online: spotlight on Early Literacy Instruction (21 online articles)

http://www.readingonline.org/editorial/edit_index.asp?HREF=/editorial/october2000/index.html

Business Literacy Institute: creating better companies through people

<http://www.business-literacy.com/articles/index.html>

Bridges4kids—building partnerships between families, schools & communities

<http://www.bridges4kids.org/Literacy.html>

Report on Literacy Programs—features reporting on literacy legislation, funding by corporations and research institutions, and important meetings and conferences

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb4389

The Literacy Letter and www.lpliteracycouncil.com are created and managed by JK Enterprises (<http://jkenterprises226.tripod.com>)

EMOTIONAL LITERACY

EMOTIONAL LITERACY is the first step towards emotional intelligence. It is the ability to recognize, understand and appropriately express our emotions. It is an essential skill which we must work to develop. Once acquired, it gives us an alternative to violence, illness, drug abuse, dysfunctional relationships, and global societal conflicts.

As we evolve and our cultures change, new forms of literacy are required to give us the proper tools to deal with a broad and ever-changing spectrum of issues. Today the need for Emotional Literacy is ever increasing, and is one of the best investments that we can make for ourselves and our children.

Emotions are an integral part of human nature. Through them we respond to life in many different ways, such as with anger, happiness, fear, love and loneliness. Emotions influence our thoughts and actions; they inspire our needs; they affect our bodies and impact on our relationships. They are not enemies to be rebuffed, repressed or rejected but rather allies to be honored, understood and directed. Ignored they become willful tyrants; respected they are our cherished helpers.

Becoming emotionally literate is learning the alphabet, grammar and vocabu-

lary of our emotional life. In a world where academic literacy is increasingly the norm and other literacies, such as technological and computer, are expected, emotional literacy must become commonplace in order for human beings to grow, evolve and face the challenges of the future.

A major contributing factor to many of the problems in modern society is unawareness of the key role played by emotions. Emotional Literacy is a positive preventive tool, which properly understood, can assist society in solving many of its ills. The capacity to deal with emotions positively is an essential element of good health. The direct connection between good health and the emotional state of a person is well documented.

Dysfunctional relationships on all levels are destroying individuals, families and whole communities. Emotional Literacy will support families and permit them to grow as individuals while sustaining a close bonded relationship. The baby whose distress is responded to lovingly and promptly will learn confidence. A child who understands the important role of emotions will have a better foundation for a joyful, fulfilled and integrated life. Adults living in healthy

relationships will serve as positive role models for their children. Older people who have learned to practice emotional literacy can complete their days with peace of mind.

Emotional Literacy can help businesses by transforming individuals and making them more efficient. By encouraging employees and managers to solve emotional problems as they occur, optimum results will be achieved.

Emotional Literacy is universally relevant. It can benefit every individual, every organization, and every profession because it has the capacity to transform each person and his or her relationships.

Emotional Literacy is a key to taking advantage of all your possibilities. It is basic to joy and enthusiasm for life. It is fundamental to your ability to love others.

Emotional Literacy is a profound and beautiful language available to everyone that can be implemented rapidly, safely, and with lasting effect. Learning how to become emotionally literate is one of the best investments that human beings can make for themselves, their children, and the future.

