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A Resource Guide to Support Minority Students at the Elementary Grade in the Kent School District with Learning Difficulties in the Area of Reading

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A RESOURCE GUIDE TO SUPPORT MINORITY STUDENTS

AT THE ELEMENTARY GRADE

IN THE KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN THE AREA OF READING

By

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A literature review was conducted to illustrate that there is an achievement gap in education between minority and white students. Probable causes contributing to the achievement gap and possible solutions to the gap were studied. The knowledge that high standards, a challenging curriculum and good teachers (Haycock, 2001), increases student achievement of minority students, inspired a project geared toward providing teachers with strategies to support minority students with learning difficulties in the area of reading. A model reading strategy guide featuring reading strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners was developed for presentation to Springbrook Elementary School. The guide listed various methods teachers can utilize in order to better meet the needs of minority students in the classroom. The results of this guide actually point to the fact that good teaching is an effective way not only to meet the needs of minority students, but also meet the needs of all students.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"To increase the achievement levels of minority and low-income students, we need to focus on what really matters: high standards, a challenging curriculum, and good teachers." (Haycock, 2001, p.1)

The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (2001) reported "there is a stark disparity between the quality of education we provide for minority children in poor neighborhoods and children in middle and upper-middle income neighborhoods" (p.3) Kati Haycock, Director of the Education Trust concurred with the National Black Caucus. Haycock (2001) contended that little was expected of students in high-poverty schools and as evidence of this point, she cited the number of homework assignments students in poverty schools received compared to more affluent schools. Research by Lee (2002) claimed that when achievement gaps narrowed, there was a correlation to shifts in instructional strategies from minimum standards focusing on basic skills, to high standards with an emphasis on advanced content and higher order thinking skills. In concurrence, Haycock (2001) posited that although adults tended to list societal issues, socioeconomic reasons and family factors for lower achievement, students on the other hand, blamed teachers who don't challenge them and who underestimate their potential as learners. Assistant Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools, John Ramos (2002) affirmed the contention that inconsistent standards impact minority achievement. In his study of Norwalk Public Schools, Ramos (2002) concluded that some teachers in Norfolk held lower expectations of minority students. A research study conducted by Cecil (1988)

in which two groups of Anglo-American teachers were randomly assigned to listen to tapes of African American children reading in standard English or African American children reading in "Black Dialect" validated Ramos' contention. Cecil (1998) found that teachers expected greater academic achievement from those students who spoke in standard English. Finally, Anyon, (1988), Bloom, (1991), Cummins (1989) and Ogbu (1974; 1978; 1981; 1993; 1991; 1992) agreed that schools and teachers often consider low socioeconomic status and a "minority" racial/ethnic background of students characteristics of "deficit" individuals, and therefore likely to indicate low academic achievement.

Trueba (2000) acknowledged that an increasing number of research studies found traditional education practices ineffective for Latino students. Efforts have been made to identify teaching strategies that are more effective with culturally and linguistically "different" students, limited English proficient students, and other "disadvantaged" and "at-risk" students (Tinagero & Ada, 1993). In his book, We Can't Teach What We Don't Know. Gary Howard, President and founder of the REACH Center for Multicultural Education in Seattle, Washington, (1999) asserted that "Only by acknowledging our ignorance and honestly questioning our assumptions can we begin to unravel key elements of the dominance paradigm" (p.69). Teachers cannot transform schools until they transform themselves (Banks, 1995). Professor Paulo Freire (1987) emphasized that teachers also need skills to critically analyze exemplary pedagogy and to translate it into cultural and linguistic codes appropriate for their students. Anthropoligist John Ogbu (1983) advocated that teachers should examine school practices critically so that they do not unintentionally promote tracking and segregation within the school and classroom,

thus perpetuating the status quo. Professor Ladson-Billings (2000) noted that one characteristic of good teachers she observed was that they all demanded, reinforced, and produced academic excellence in their students. Further, Ladson-Billings (2000) concluded that culturally relevant teaching required that teachers attend to students' academic needs, not merely make them "feel good."

Statement of the Problem

Trends in Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) scores provided evidence of the disparity between minority and non-minority students in Kent. Minority students in the Kent School District failed to meet standard on the WASL at the same rate as their white counterparts (OSPI, 2002). In the area of reading, 70.5% of the 4th grade White students in Kent met standard compared to only 46.7% of African American students, 40.0% of Hispanic and 39.4% of American Indian students (OSPI, 2002). The Kent School District adopted the mission to Close the Academic Achievement Gap. But do teachers understand what this entails, and do they have the skills to make it happen? Does the Kent School District Mission Statement that stating that all students will be successful provide enough incentive for teachers to work toward the mission?

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop a resource guide for Elementary classroom teachers to support minority students with learning difficulties in the area of reading. This guide was to be implemented at Springbrook Elementary in the Kent School District, in Kent Washington. Teachers who utilized the resource guide would find they had gained a heightened awareness of effective reading strategies and an understanding of how to design safe learning environments for all of their students.

Borrowing the words of the Kent School District Mission Statement, the goal of this project is to "Successfully Prepare all Students for Their Future."

Limitations of the Project

For the purpose of this project is was necessary to establish the following limitations:

Scope: The resource guide for Elementary classroom teachers to support minority students with learning difficulties in the area of reading was developed specifically for first grade through sixth grade students at Springbrook Elementary in Kent.

Research: The review of literature was limited primarily to research conducted within the last five (5) years. Relevant information on reading strategies and student growth was limited to information from six (6) public elementary schools in Washington State.

Data: Data used to show minority test scores were obtained from two main sources, The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The WASL is a fourth grade assessment and the ITBS assesses third and sixth grade.

Causes of the Achievement Gap: The review of literature focused on minority status as a factor leading to the academic achievement gap. The author recognizes there are numerous factors that can be attributed to an achievement gap.

Target Population: The resource guide to support minority students at the elementary level was designed for use in grades one through six.

Definition of Terms

Best Practices: Instructional techniques and strategies that incorporate the full range of experiences that children need in order to become literate. (Stinson, 2002).

Culture: The values and assumptions that guide everyday life. (Trueba, 2000).

Curriculum: Includes the goals and objectives of the program, the teacher's role, the equipment and the materials, the space arrangement, the kinds of activities and the way they are scheduled. (Berns, 1993).

Culturally relevant teaching: The pedagogy of opposition not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment. Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. (Ladson-Billings, 1992a).

Minority: For the purpose of this paper minority students are the ethnic categories listed in the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) reports. Those categories include American Indian, Asian, Black, and Hispanic. Minority is synonymous with non-white. (OSPI WASL Reports)

Multicultural Education: A field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly fromethnic studies and women studies. (Banks & Banks, 1995).

White: An identified ethnic category on the WASL. (OSPI WASL Reports)

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

It has been argued (Lee, 2002) that achievement gaps in schools have lifetime

consequences including: limiting opportunities for minority students in higher education,

employment, and earnings. According to Wang and Kovach (1996) the United States

leads the world in the number or children living in poverty and data suggested that people

living in poverty are more likely to be crime victims, receive inadequate health care, and

suffer from a variety of physical, psychological, and social traumas. The National Black

Caucus of State Legislators (2001) lamented that the majority of children who attended

high poverty schools in which most students are ethnic minorities were cut off from

information, skills, and guidance that prepared them to pursue their dreams. Further,

those legislators stressed that "the United States, by failing to provide its students with

the skills to compete in the 21st Century, is failing to invest in a competitive future for the

nation" (The National Black Caucus of State Legislators, 2001, p. 3).

Evidence of Need

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported that between

the years of 1970 and 1988, the gap between African American and White students was

cut in half, and the gap between Latino and White students declined by one third

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). In addition, NAEP (2001) reported that

reading achievement among 17-year old African Americans and Latinos increased in the

1970s and 1980s thus narrowing the achievement gap between those two groups and

White students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). Since 1988, Director of

the Education Trust, Kati Haycock, (2001) lamented that the gaps between white and minority students had widened. In mathematics the gap between 13-year old African American students and White students was at its most narrow point in 1990 and the gap between Latino students and White students in math was at its narrowest in 1992, both gaps widened in the 1990s (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). The 1998 census provided more data representing the achievement gap, as it documented educational attainment differences between African Americans, Latinos, and Whites (see Table I) (US Census Bureau). The US Census Bureau (1998) documented that all three groups, African American, Latino, and White students, showed declining numbers as the level of education increased, but, African American and Latino students had a much lower percentage of students earning college degrees than did the White students. In her article *Closing the Achievement Gap*, Kati Haycock, 2001, explained that only 1 in 50 Latino and 1 in 100 African American 17-year olds can read and gain information from specialized text, while 1 in 12 White 17 year olds can demonstrate competency in this area. Haycock (2001) continued to say that about 1 in 30 Latinos and 1 in 100 African American high school students can do multi-step problem solving and elementary algebra, compared to 1 in 10 white students and that by the end of high school, African American and Latino students have skills in reading and math that are at the same level as 8th grade White students. Haycock's claims were substantiated by data from the NAEP (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001) which confirmed that scores for 17-year old Hispanic students were well below those of their white peers in reading, mathematics, and science (ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education 2001).

The 1998 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) results showed that 16% of the students in the bottom tier were non-minority students, compared to 49% minority students in the lowest tier (Ramos 2002). The 2001 Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) documented severe discrepancies between the number of 4th grade minority students who met the standards in math and reading and the percentage of White students who met the standards (OSPI WASL Reports 2001). Specifically, only 48.2% of 4th grade African American and 40.4% of the Latino students met the standard in reading compared to 72% of White students. The OSPI WASL Reports (2001) further documented that only 20.0% of African American and 19.5% of Latino students met the standard in math compared to 49.1% of White students.

Analysis of WASL score data by Huggins and Celio (2002) revealed that the achievement gap between nonwhite and white/Asian students in Washington's public schools was significant. Huggins and Celio (2002) considered the score differentiations of 24 to 38 points in mathematics and 12 to 19 points in reading to be medium to large gaps and concluded that their studies indicated that low-income students and nonwhite students do not have equitable access to opportunities to learn in Washington.

Probable Causes

When adults were interviewed as to what they considered to be factors leading to the achievement gap, their reasons generally centered around parents and families; parents who don't care, students who are poor and come to school without breakfast, and parents who are frequently absent from the home (Haycock 2001). In contrast, students blamed teachers who didn't know their subjects, counselors who underestimated their potential, principals who dismissed their concerns, and a boring curriculum (Haycock

2001). Huggins and Celio (2002) cited a complex combination of home, school, and societal factors contribute to the gap. Socioeconomic contexts of schooling – such as differences in ethnicity, socioeconomic class, family, and community resources play important roles in educational attainment (Wang 1993). Further, Wang & Kovach (1996) argued that one factor that contributed to the achievement gap was that African American and other minority students tended to be in schools where overall achievement is low. Finally, in their article *Disparities Demystified*, (2000) Pedgro Noguera and Antwi Akrom posited that historically more emphasis has been placed on achieving racial integration than on teaching a diverse population. Noguera and Akrom (2000) went on to say that African-American students were seen as problem students who were disadvantaged and deficient compared to white students and educating them was considered and continues to be considered a problem.

Financial Resource Allocations

While some researchers argued that when more resources were allocated to black students, their achievement reflected those efforts (Grissmer, Flanagan, Williamson 1998). Hanushek, (1996) argued that there was little evidence that the growth in spending has been disproportionately aimed at African Americans and that spending increases had been more effective for them (Hanushek 1996). In their position paper Improving Educational Outcomes for African American Children (2001) the National Black Caucus of State Legislators differed from Hanushek's (1996) view when they identified limited financial resources as a reason for the ongoing performance gap between minority and white children in core academic subjects. The caucus' argument was substantiated by the data proving that the nation's inner cities remain among the country's most economically

distressed areas and that the wealthiest school districts spend 56 percent more per student

than the poorest school districts (National Black Caucus of State Legislators, 2001).

Researchers Huggins & Celio (2002) affirmed the caucus' report by stating that the

districts with the highest enrollments of low-income students and students of color have

less money to spend per student than districts with the lowest enrollments of these student

populations. In addition, The Education Trust (2002) found the average gap between

high-income and low-income districts was $1139 per student and between districts with

high and low enrollments of students of color was $979 per student.

Teacher Efficacy

Huggins & Celio (2002) argued that student achievement was directly affected by

the quality of students' classroom teachers. One concern has been that only one-half of

the teachers with 90% or greater minority enrollments met states' minimum requirements

to teach math and science (Haycock 2001). Thirty–two percent of classes in secondary

schools with high percentages of low-income students were taught by teachers lacking a

major in their field compared to 23 percent in schools with low percentages of low-

income students (Huggins & Celio, 2002). Huggins & Celio (2002) further warned that

African American and Native American students were the least likely to be taught 8th

grade mathematics by a teacher with a major in mathematics.

Linda Darling-Hammond expressed teacher efficacy this way: "Teachers who

know a lot about teaching and learning and who work in environments that allow them to

know students well are the critical elements of successful learning." (Darling-Hammond,

1997, p.8). Knowles and Brown (2000) supported the concept that all students can learn

and believed educators must offer all students tasks that are equally interesting,

important, and engaging. Professor Winifred Montgomery (2001) indicated that cultural awareness affects teacher efficacy when she warned: "Many teachers are faced with a limited understanding of cultures other than their own and the possibility that this limitation will negatively affect their students' ability to become successful learners." (Montgomery 2001, p.4) Ramos (2002) argued that teachers often made predictions on student achievement based on a student's ethnicity, predictions that frequently led to reality in the classroom. In his article, Transforming Student Assessment, (1997) D. Monty Neill, co-chair of the National Forum on Assessment, agreed with Ramos' contention that teacher predictions led to lower achievement. Neill (1997) argued that students of color and low-income backgrounds have felt the highest negative impact of low teacher expectations and low-level curricula.

District Accountability

Ramos (2002) argued that many districts do not have strategic plans, clear standards, professional development for teachers, and accountability measures that hold schools responsible for the achievement of all of their students. In the Multi-Ethnic Think Tank's (METT) position paper the committee proposed adding a fifth Washington State learning goal to ensure competent education and correct a system failure that has led to poor academic achievement in minority students (METT 2001). The METT stated: "We believe that nothing short of an educational paradigm shift from a Euro-centric to a culturally-inclusive pedagogy will ensure the success of all students." (METT 2001).

Socioeconomic Factors

The role of poverty cannot be dismissed as a factor to the achievement gap (Huggins & Celio, 2002). Grissmer, Flanagan, & Willamson, (1998); Hedges & Nowell,

(1998); and Smith & O'day, (1991) all listed socioeconomic and family conditions including educational attainment, income, poverty, and single households as factors that contributed to the achievement gap. The socioeconomic contexts of schooling-such as differences in ethnicity, socioeconomic class, family and community resources (both social and economic), and patterns of residential and educational segregation-play important roles in differences in educational attainment (Bartelt 1994a, Kantor and Brenzel 1993).

Kent School District WASL performance data which compares student score trends by lunch status coincides with the belief that poverty affects achievement (OSPI WASL Reports, 2002). In the area of reading, only 40% of the 4th-grade students who qualified for free lunch met standard, compared to 69.5% of the students who received no subsidy. The achievement gap was even more pronounced in 7th-grade where only 16% of the students on free lunch met standard compared to 48.3% who did not qualify for assistance (OSPI WASL Reports, 2002).

Solutions

Educators need to recognize the disparity along racial and ethnic lines (Stiff 2002). Teachers need to examine best practices and create lesson plans that support the belief that all students can learn (Ramos 2002). Results in Kentucky indicated that students can achieve at high levels if they are taught at high levels and then afforded the time to complete their work (Haycock 2001). Wang and Kovach (1996) would agree with Kentucky's findings, as they reiterated that students achieved mastery when given sufficient time and proper learning conditions. The Kentucky reform also proved that in high schools where students took more rigorous classes, they performed better on

standardized tests (Haycock, 2001). The National Black Caucus of State Legislators

(2001) argued that states and districts must increase funding to implement standards,

reduce class size, improve teacher quality, and provide necessary classroom supports.

Further the caucus reported that money can have a direct and positive impact on a

school's ability to acquire computer technology, raise teacher salaries and attract

qualified teachers, upgrade laboratory and sports equipment, purchase up-to-date

curricula, and maintain structurally safe buildings (National Black Caucus of State

Legislators 2001).

Summary

The review of literature in Chapter 2 focused on the perception of scholars of

causes contributing to the minority achievement gap and the lifelong effects the gap had

on a large segment of our society. This literature supported the assumption that there

were steps educators and policy makers could take to narrow the gap and lesson the

negative impact on our minority populations. Research has indicated that the causes of

the gap were multifaceted and had overarching implications in the current societal trends,

policies on educational funding, and educator training and attitudes. If the achievement

gap was to be remedied, teachers, administrators, districts, and state and national

legislatures would need to work in concert to identify specific areas of need, provide

necessary funding training, and to implement research proven programs into all schools.

This literature review was clear that minority students do not achieve the same level of

success that non-minority students achieve.

CHAPTER 3

Project Procedures

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to develop a model resource guide for Elementary

School classroom teachers to support minority students with learning difficulties in the

area of reading. To achieve this objective, a review of recent related literature and

research was conducted. Additionally, related information from selected sources was

obtained and analyzed.

Need

"Historically in Washington State, students of ethnic minority and low socio-

economic communities have had the distinction of poor academic achievement.

This, however, is not a true reflection of our student's academic ability. It is a

reflection of systemic failure, as evidenced by the Washington Assessment on

Student Learning (WASL) and other assessment tools." (METT, 2001, p. 1).

Analysis of assessment data for the Kent School District revealed disturbing

trends in the number of English Language Learner's (ELL) achievement on the 4th grade

WASL. The number of ELL students who met standard on the WASL was significantly

lower than the general population. Specifically, data from 1998-2002 documented that in

the area of reading, White students scored higher on the WASL than American Indian,

Asian, Black, and Hispanic students. During the 2001-2002 school year, Dr. Grohe, the

Superintendent of the Kent School District, announced the district goal to close the

achievement gap between minority and non-minority students. Despite a sincere desire by

teachers to achieve this goal, the author as well as many other teachers, were at a loss as to what measures could be implemented in order to see results in their classrooms. In an attempt to provide direction and guidance to teachers at Springbrook Elementary, the author decided to develop a resource guide to provide teachers with sample lessons and ideas for helping all students to feel accepted and achieve success in the classroom. Additionally, the guide provided a list of resources for those teachers who wanted to further their knowledge of factors attributing to the achievement gap and of multicultural education.

<u>Procedures for the Project</u>

The writer undertook the following procedures to develop a resource guide to improve minority student reading achievement.

- An extensive review and analysis of related research and literature was completed.

- Related information from the following Washington State schools was reviewed and analyzed.

Gildo Rey Auburn School District	Neely O'Brien Kent School District
Benjamin Franklin Vancouver School District	Lind Elementary Lind School District
Hofstetter Elementary Colville School District	Farwell Elementary Mead School District

- A review and compilation of current and effective reading strategies were adapted and developed.

- Professionals in the area of Multicultural Education, Accountability and Assessment, and Minority Education were contacted at the Office of the

Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), their opinions and suggestions were integrated into the guide whenever appropriate.

Implementation

The resource guide for strategies to support minority students with learning difficulties in the area of reading will begin implementation during the 2003-2004 school year. The guide will be distributed to the staff at Springbrook Elementary one week before a scheduled staff meeting. Teachers will be asked to review the guide and then bring it, along with any questions they have to the staff meeting. During the meeting the author will explain the reasons for developing the guide, the ways in which teachers could develop culturally sensitive classrooms, and will give a brief in-service of best practices in educating minority students. Additionally, the author provided an overview on how to utilize the resource guide as a quick reference during instructional planning. The resource guide was also be added to the professional section in the Springbrook library for future reference and for availability to new teachers.

CHAPTER 4

A RESOUCE GUIDE TO SUPPORT

MINORITY STUDENTS AT THE ELEMENTARY GRADE LEVEL

IN THE KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN THE AREA OF READING

This project was written for presentation to staff members at Springbrook Elementary in the Kent School District in Kent, Washington. The project lists key strategies for reading instruction, which will enable teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners in their classroom.

A Resource Guide to Support Minority Students

At the Elementary Grade Level in the

Kent School District with Learning

Difficulties in the Area of Reading.

Patty Drobny

Forward

"To increase the achievement levels of minority and low-income students, we need to focus on what really matters: high standards, a challenging curriculum, and good teachers." (Haycock, 2001, p.1)

The purpose of this reading strategy guide for elementary general education classroom teachers is to assist you in your efforts to effectively meet the needs of all of your students. Data and studies repeatedly support the fact that an achievement gap does exist between minority and white students. Noted scholars have debated and listed reasons for the achievement gap. Research by Lee (2002) claimed that when achievement gaps narrowed, there was a correlation to shifts in instructional strategies from minimum standards focusing on basic skills, to high standards with an emphasis on advanced content and higher order thinking skills. This project is intended to provide teachers with strategies to support their reading instruction with particular attention to challenging all students and meeting the needs of diverse learners in their classrooms.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNIT ONE

Project Overview

Program Overview

The 2001 Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) documented severe discrepancies between the number of 4th grade minority students who met the standards in math and reading and the percentage of White students who met the standards (OSPI WASL Reports, 2001). One of the reasons students attributed to the achievement gap was teachers who did not know their subjects (Haycock 2001). The purpose of a guide to teaching strategies of minority students in the area of reading is based on the increasing demand for diverse teaching strategies in the classroom. The ethnic composition of American classrooms has changed dramatically in the past decade and continues to change today. Educators need to understand the needs of diverse learners and be able to differentiate instruction in order to serve the students in their classrooms. Recent political charges have also inspired this project. President George Bush has stated that ongoing professional development in which teachers work together in their buildings to reflect on their practice is important to ensuring that no child is left behind (Bush 2001). In their article, *Looking inside classrooms: Reflecting on the "how" as well as the "what" in effective reading instruction,* Professors Taylor, Peterson , Pearson, and Rodriguez stated:

> "If we are serious about the metaphor of "leaving no child behind," our
> data would suggest that we, as professionals, must possess the conviction,
> the knowledge, and the teaching techniques necessary to ensure that every
> child is equipped with a "full backpack" of skills, strategies, habits, and
> dispositions toward literacy." (Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, Rodgriquez, 2002,
> p. 278-279.)

The goals and perspectives of this project focus on the skills and strategies needed to successfully meet the needs of all students in an effort to fill all of the backpacks with skills and strategies and thus narrow the achievement gap between minority and white students.

Vision Statement

The Kent School District's 2002-2003 mission statement "To Successfully Prepare All Students for Their Future." combined with WASL test score results showing discrepancies between minority and white students provide the motivation for this project. By researching and utilizing best practices in reading, teachers are empowered to make informed choices about their instructional strategies and lessons. Although there are several documents defining Best Practice in reading, much of the research used for developing this project is based on the *Standards for the English Language Arts,* issued in 1996, by the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National council of Teachers of English (NCTE). These two organizations were selected by the Department of Education to develop a set of unified national reading and writing standards. It is my goal that this project will educate teachers in effective strategies for teaching reading and that all students will benefit from this knowledge, including the minority students attending school at Springbrook Elementary in Kent.

An effective reading program will create the following results:

1. An increase in student learning.

2. An increase in minority students' scores on standardized tests.

3. An increase in teacher efficacy.

4. An improved understanding of differentiating instruction for diverse learners.

5. Increased amounts of reading lessons reflection and revision.

6. An increase in minority student confidence levels and abilities in reading.

7. Professional growth.

8. The sharing of successful practices in reading.

Program Description

The project consists of three sections aimed at teaching successful reading strategies. Unit One is a program overview explaining the purpose of the project and anticipated outcomes of successfully implementing the strategies.

Unit Two lists qualities of effective reading instruction as defined by author Jerome Harste in the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) guidelines report published in 1989. After the initial introduction to the qualities, each quality is described in detail with specific applications to support that quality in the classroom.

Unit Three consists of pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading strategies. Particular attention has been given to teaching comprehension in the during reading section because comprehension is the reason for reading. (Armbruster. Lehr, Osborn, 2001). Teachers may find that they are already implementing several of these strategies in their daily instructions. With this in mind, educators are encouraged to look at their current practices and ask how those techniques are successfully meeting the needs of all of the students in their classroom. It might be especially useful for teachers to look at test

score results from the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in order to compare the reading scores of minority and white students. Analyzing data also can help teachers to direct their instruction to meet the specific needs of the students in their classroom.

UNIT TWO

EFFECTIVE QUALITIES

OF

READING INSTRUCTION

"It is worth noting, though that among these thousands of pages of reading standards issued over the past decade, some of the clearest and most concise explanations appeared in the original 1989 NCTE Policy Guidelines reports, which we draw on freely here, with special thanks to its author, Jerome Harste." (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998, p.30)

Qualities of Best Practice in Teaching Reading

1. "Reading means getting meaning from print." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 30)

2. "Reading is a process." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 30)

3. "Hearing books read aloud is the beginning of learning to read." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 30)

4. "Beginning reading instruction should provide children with many opportunities to interact with print." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 30)

5. "Reading is the best practice for learning to read." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 31)

6. "An effective reading program exposes students to a wide and rich array of print and goes beyond the basal." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 31)

7. "Choice is an integral part of behavior." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 31)

8. "Teachers should model reading." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 32)

9. "Effective teachers of reading help children actively use reading and writing as tools for learning." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 32)

10. "Children learn best in a low-risk environment." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 32)

11. "Young children should have well-structured instruction in phonics." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 33)

12. "Teachers should provide daily opportunities for children to share and discuss what they have been reading and writing." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 33)

13. "Writing experiences are provided at all grade levels." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 34)

1. READING MEANS GETTING MEANING FROM TEXT (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 30)

The main goal of reading is comprehension. Students need to understand what they are

reading. (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998)

"Good Readers are Purposeful" (Armbruster, Lehr, Osborn, 2001, p. 48) Good readers

read to find out something, to gather information, or to be entertained.

"Good Readers are Active" (Armbruster, Lehr, Osborn, 2001, p. 48) Good readers think

as they read. They use their experiences and knowledge of their world, their vocabulary

and language structure, and their knowledge of reading strategies.

Adapted from: Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children
to Read. Center for the Improvement of Early Reading
Achievement (CIERA).

"Research over 30 years has shown that instruction in comprehension can help students
understand what they read, remember what they read, and communicate with others about
what they read." (Armbruster, Lehr, Osborn, 2001, p. 48)

<u>2. READING IS A PROCESS</u> (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 30)

Reading is a higher order thinking process that involves strategies before, during, and after reading.

Before Reading: Look at the title and illustrations. Think about what the story might be like, what you think you already know, and what you hope to find out. Before and during reading, the teacher elicits predictions, poses questions, and utilizes illustrations to build a sense of mutual discovery (Hopkins, 1997).

During Reading: Continue to make inferences and check to see if they are accurate. Ask questions. Use illustrations to add to meaning.

After Reading: Talk about what you read in small groups. According to Morrow & Smith (1990) a study of kindergarten students, children who engaged in small group discussions of stories that were read aloud were better able to recall the story than students who discussed the story one-on-one with the teacher or participated in whole class discussions.

3. HEARING BOOKS READ IS THE BEGINNING OF LEARNING TO READ. (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 30)

Teacher Read Aloud: This provides an effective reading model for the students. Students hear how to be more fluent, add voice when they read, and be enthusiastic. Teacher modeling improves the reading fluency of students (Eldredge and Quinn, Heckelman, McAllister, Reitsman, 1998). It is critical for English Language Learner (ELL) students to have frequent opportunities for quality input and interactions with native speakers, read alouds and audio books meet this need. (Hardaway, Vardell, and Young, 2001).

Read Naturally: The Read Naturally Program combines three strategies for improving fluency: teacher modeling, repeated reading, and progress monitoring. Repeated reading improves fluency (Larking, 1988). In this program, students listen to tapes as they read a nonfiction story. Students continue to practice reading until they are confident they can reach a predetermined fluency goal.

Books on tape: Students read along with a book as they listen to a fluent reader. This acts as a partner reading and modeled reading activity. English Language Learners benefit from frequent opportunities for quality input from interactions with native speakers audiobooks are one way to meet this need (Hardaway, Vardell, Young, 2001).

At home reading: Parents can help their children by reading to them and discussing what they read.

4. BEGINNING READING INSTRUCTION SHOULD PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERACT WITH PRINT. (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 30)

Predictable Books: Books in which the illustrations enhance and support text and include the elements of repetition, rhyme, rhythm and style. (Bromely, 1992) Provide books that are predictable so students can practice making inferences and predictions.

Book Selection: Surround students with quality literature and allow them to select books that interest them and are at their readability level. "If students are to learn and apply reading strategies, they need texts that provide a balance between support and challenge." (Rog & Burton, 2001, p. 348)

Word Wall: An easy to access resource for investigating and solving words on one's own. (Routman, 2003) Post spelling words and sight words on the wall so students can refer to them and use them while reading and writing.

Word Games: Play concentration, boggle, and spelling games to allow students to practice letter and word recognition.

<u>5. READING IS THE BEST PRACTICE FOR LEARNING TO READ.</u> (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 31)

Teachers must provide ample time for students to read:

Independent Reading: Also known as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). SSR is a regularly scheduled time (usually 15 to 30 minutes) of total class silent reading in self-selected stories. Benefits include greater interest in reading, sense of classroom community, appreciation of reading, and improvement in writing. (Flood, Lapp, Wood, 1997, p. 195)

Partner Reading: In partner reading, paired students take turns reading aloud to each other (Armburster, Lehr, & Osborne, p. 28) Allow time for students to read a book with a partner. This allows them to hear another person reading and to discuss what they read.

Choral Reading: Reading poetry and easy texts together helps to build fluency and motivation. Practicing through choral reading is a collaborative and nonthreatening way to participate orally (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Choral reading is especially helpful for ELL students who feel anxious because of communication barriers (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Literature Circles: Literature circles are small, often student directed literature conversations about an excellent text (Routman, A-13). Recent research on literature circles has shown that literature circles improve student achievement. Martinez-Roldan and Lopez-Robertson found that young bilingual children are able to have rich discussions if they have regular opportunities to engage with books (Daniels, 2002).

<u>6. AN EFFECTIVE READING PROGRAM EXPOSES STUDENTS TO A WIDE AND</u>
<u>RICH ARRAY OF PRINT AND GOES BEYOND THE USE OF THE BASAL.</u>
(Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 31)

Use a variety of types of print: "An effective reading program goes well beyond the

basal reader to include a variety of materials both narrative and expository, provides

experiences with children's literature and encourages self-selection of books."

(Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998, p. 31)

Build a classroom library: Classroom libraries and books improve reading

achievement." (Routman, 2003, p. 64) "Children read a great deal more when they have

easy access to books, and well designed, organized ample classroom libraries provide the

easiest access for students." (Routman, 2003, p. 64)

      Solicit donations from parents

      Shop at garage sales

      Attend library and warehouse sales

      Use book order points to purchase books

<u>7. CHOICE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF LITERATE BEHAVIOR.</u> (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 31)

"Let students choose books they want to read and give them time to read them.: (Routman, 2003, p. 43)

"Letting students choose what they read in a classroom and school that have excellent libraries is essential for a successful independent reading program and for turning students on to reading." (Routman, 2003, p. 97)

"Reading competence is closely tied to the amount of time children spend reading on their own, and students read more when they can choose their reading materials." (Routman, 2003, p. 97)

8. <u>"TEACHERS SHOULD MODEL READING."</u> (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 32)

"It is vital that children get to observe a 'joyfully literate adult" using print in a variety of ways every day." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 32)

"By listening to good models of fluent reading, students learn how a reader's voice can help written text make sense." (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborne, 2001, p. 26)

"Hearing a model of fluent reading is not the only benefit of reading aloud to children. Reading to children also increases their knowledge of the world, their vocabulary, their familiarity with written language ('book language"), and their interest in reading." (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborne, 2001, p. 26)

"Frequent structured read-alouds help kindergartners who lacked exposure to story reading develop familiarity with literacy." (Wood & Salvetti, 2001, p. 76)

"Reading aloud to children as often as possible helps build the foundation for alter reading success." (Wood & Salvetti, 2001, p. 76)

9. "EFFECTIVE TEACHERS OF READING HELP CHILDREN ACTIVELY USE READING AND WRITING AS TOOLS FOR LEARNING." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 32)

"Teachers can demonstrate the usefulness of reading and writing by offering opportunities for children to engage in meaningful reading and writing during content-area instruction." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 32)

'Combine reading aloud with shared reading and teach comprehension strategies at the same time. Teach reading in social studies and science, not just in reading and literature classes." (Routman, 2003, p. 207)

Use nonfiction texts such as Junior Scholastic magazines to engage the students in reading and discussing real world situations.

Use science textbooks and activities to integrate comparing and contrasting activities into real world situations.

Use internet research to extend learning activities for reading basals or science and social studies activities.

10. "CHILDREN LEARN READING BEST IN A LOW-RISK ENVIRONMENT."
(Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 32)

Teachers need to establish low-risk learning opportunities for their students. This may
include academic instruction or thoughtful pairing of students.

"Reading teachers should help children understand that predicting what will happen next
in stories, jumping to conclusions, and confirming or disconfirming their hypotheses, are
effective and powerful reading strategies rather than errors." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde,
1998 p. 33)

"Teachers should consider personality traits as well as ability when assigning pairs for
specific reading tasks." (Stinson, 2002, p. 24)

Shared reading lessens the risk for struggling readers and ELL students. As Regi
Routman (2003) described, shared reading is an activity wherein students and their
teacher read a text together. The teacher takes the lead and the students follow along and
actively participate by reading aloud.

11. "YOUNG CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE WELL-STRUCTURED INSTRUCTION IN PHONICS." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 33)

Phonics is a way of teaching reading a spelling that stresses symbol – sound relationships. (Yopp & Yopp, 2000, p. 131)

Phonics is described as an important part of reading and writing experiences, an essential cueing system that children use along with other kinds of information. " (Dahl & Scharer, 2000, p. 584)

"Children learning to read an alphabetic language, like English, must learn the alphabetic principle – that letters stand for the sounds of the language." (Adams, 1990, p. 65)

"For children just beginning to read – typically in kindergarten and first grade – it is vital to learn the sound-symbol relationships of written language." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 33)

12. "TEACHERS SHOULD PROVIDE DAILY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO SHARE AND DISCUSS WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN READING AND WRITING." (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 33)

Author sharing times, peer-tutoring activities, and collaborative research projects can provide students with much needed sharing opportunities (Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 1998).

Tutoring can lead to higher reading scores for both the tutee and the tutor (May, 1994).

When children write summaries of what they read, their comprehension and content learning are enhanced (Bromley, 1992).

Discussion is especially beneficial for English Language Learners. Instructional conversations offer opportunities for second-language learners to use language as a tool for increased proficiency (Williams, 2001).

"Students learn more when they are able to talk to one another and be actively involved." (Routman, 2003, p. 207)

13. "WRITING EXPERIENCES ARE PROVIDED AT ALL GRADE LEVELS."

(Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998 p. 34)

Utilize journals to provide writing opportunities.

"Journals: A record of thinking-made–real that writers can use daily; a tool for achieving writing fluency, connecting reading and writing, enhancing teacher-student and student-student communication, and tracking classroom learning." (Flood, Lapp, & Wood, 1997, p. 20)

Literary journals are written by individuals to clarify their thinking about literature; explore deeper levels of meaning and develop writing ideas (Flood, Lapp, & Wood, 1997).

Unit THREE

Strategies

Before Reading

During Reading

After Reading

Before Reading: Introduce the book, talk about the cover, title, and author. Provide necessary background knowledge for understanding; encourage predictions (Routman, p. 136).

During Reading: Continue to make inferences and check to see if they are accurate. Ask questions. Use illustrations to add to meaning.

After Reading: Talk about what you read with a friend. Does the story remind you of anything that has happened in your life? Share thoughts and opinions about the story.

BEFORE

READING

STRATEGIES

BOND WITH YOUR STUDENTS TO INCREASE MOTIVATION AND MAKE THEM FEEL VALUED.

" We've all had students who, for whatever reasons, are difficult for us to love. But bonding is quite another matter. We can and must bond with them all. This is not a choice but a duty and responsibility." (Routman, Reading Essentials, 1999, p. 12)

The following is a list generated by discussions with teachers in the Kent School District of ways they bond with their students.

1. Learn what your students are interested in, hobbies, sports, books, etc.
2. Design a welcoming classroom including books, posters, and artifacts that represent diverse cultures.
3. Model and require respect in the classroom so all students feel safe.
4. Welcome parents and family members.
5. Greet your students every morning.
6. Show you care by your words and your actions.
7. Put students' names and pictures on bulletin boards.
8. High five students when they do something well.
9. Listen when a student wants to tell about an exciting event they experienced.
10. Shake hands with students and introduce them.
11. Share things about yourself so students feel safer sharing things about themselves.
12. Attend night band and orchestra concerts to show students you support their activities even if they aren't during the school day.
13. Call parents to let them know that a student did well on a particular assignment.
14. Thank students for their input and participation.
15. Assign class roles to share the responsibility of a successful classroom.
16. Let a kid hug you even though it is not politically correct.
17. Laugh with students. Laugh at yourself.
18. Spend a recess out on the playground
19. Bring an unexpected treat in once in awhile, like a new book, or cookies.

CONNECT STUDENTS TO THE STORY

Teach students to preview the literature selection.

Look at the illustrations: Note how an illustration or visual helps your

understanding (Routman, 2003).

What do the pictures tell you?

Is this a historical story or a current story?

Can you predict what the story is about by making inferences about the pictures?

Activate prior knowledge: The role of background knowledge is critical

(Anderson & Person, 1984). A readers background knowledge provides a

foundation for comprehending, learning, and remembering what is read

(Anderson, 1984).

Use aspects of the story to find out what the students already know. Use a Know,

Want to Know, Learned (KWL) chart to elicit prior knowledge. The KWL

procedure involves students in activating prior knowledge, asking questions to set

purposes for reading, and writing answers for those questions (Ogle, 1986).

Set purposes for reading: Students will engage in work that is connected to their

lives and in projects in which they see value (Routman, 2003).

Explain what the student will learn from reading the story.

Use the prediction list to identify questions to answer while reading.

DURING

READING

STRATEGIES

Comprehension Instruction

"Reading comprehension depends upon being able to successfully and appropriately use a number of strategies: accessing prior knowledge, creating mental images of the information, making predictions and inferences, monitoring understanding, and using "fix-up" strategies when necessary." (Oster, 2001, p. 64)

Text comprehension can be improved by instruction that helps readers use specific comprehension strategies while reading.

The following six strategies to teach comprehension are recommended in Put Reading First: The Research Blocks for Teaching Children to Read. Written by Dr. Bonnie B. Armbruster, Fran Lehr, and Jean Osborn. (pp. 47-55)

1. Teach students to monitor their comprehension.

2. Use Graphic Organizers.

3. Ask questions.

4. Teach students to generate their own questions.

5. Teach story structure.

6. Summarize.

1. Monitor Comprehension.

Washington State's Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) described four

standards that students much attain to become skilled readers (Ciardi, 1998).

- The student understands and used different skills and uses various strategies to

  read.

- The student understands the meaning of what is read.

- The student sets goals and evaluates progress in order to improve his/her

  reading.

- The student reads different materials for a variety of purposes.

  Adapted from: Research into Practice: An overview of Reading Research for

  Washington State (1998).

Before Reading: Good Readers clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text

(Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001).

During Reading: Good readers monitor their understanding, adjust their reading speed

as necessary, and use reading strategies as they read (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001).

After Reading: Good readers check for understanding of what they read.

Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn (2001) asserted that comprehension monitoring strategies

students should learn and be able to draw upon when reading independently include:

- Identifying difficult text passages. Page? Paragraph?
- Identifying what the difficult passages are. What does the author mean?
- Restating difficult text passages in the reader's own words.
- Looking back through the text. Will rereading a chapter or section, help the reader to understand what is happening now?
- Look forwarding in the text. Are their clues or information that would help the reader to understand the text?

2. Use Graphic Organizers.

In the Kent School District use Thinking Maps: Tools for Learning Innovative Learning Group® by Dr. David Hyerle. Below are descriptions of each of the eight maps developed by Dr. David Hyerle.

Circle Map: Used for defining things in context and brainstorming.

Bubble Map: Used for describing attributes such as character traits, properties, or attributes.

Double Bubble Map: Used for comparing and contrasting two things such as characters or events.

Tree Map: Used to enable students to do both inductive and deductive classification. Students learn to map main ideas and supporting details.

Brace Map: Used for identifying the parts of the whole. This helps students access their spatial reasoning.

Flow Map: Used for showing sequences, orders, time lines and cycles.

Multi-flow Map: Used for seeking causes of events and the effects.

Bridge Map: Used to provide a pathway for creating and interpreting analogies. Also develops analytical reasoning and metaphorical concepts.

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3. Ask Questions:

Research shows that teacher questioning strongly supports and advances students' learning from reading. (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001)

"Questioning is a critical strategy that helps readers make meaning of literature by promoting critical thinking about what is being read." (Literacy Matters, 2002)

Asking questions is a form of making predictions, a critical component of comprehension (Bromely, 1992).

"We know that "why" questions foster critical thinking and encourage divergent responses, and so, they should be the backbone of questioning repertoire." (Bromely, 1992, p. 139)

'Questioning is one of the most important tools a teacher has to help students develop comprehension and understanding skills at any grade level." (Stinson, 2002, p. 33)

Questions are effective because they:
- Give students a purpose for reading (Literacy Matters, 2002)
- Focus students' attention (Literacy Matters, 2002)
- Encourage active reading (Literacy Matters, 2002)
- Help students review content and relate what they already know (Literacy Matters, 2002).

Questions during reading should
- Clarify and review (Literacy Matters, 2002)
- Confirm and create predictions (Literacy Matters, 2002)
- Encourage personal connections (Literacy Matters, 2002)

4. Teach Students to Generate Their Own Questions:

"By generating questions, students become aware of whether they can answer the questions and if they understand what they are reading." (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborne, 2001, p. 51)

5. Teach students to Recognize Story Structure.

"Students who can recognize story structure have greater appreciation for and

understanding of the stories." (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborne, 2001, p. 53)

"Instruction in the content and organization of stories improves students'

comprehension and memory of stories." (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborne, 2001, p. 53)

Create Story maps to identify the setting, characters, plot, climax, problem &

solution.

6. Summarize.

"Summarizing requires students to determine what is important in whay they are reading, to condense this information, and to put it into their own words."
(Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborne, 2001, p. 53)

When students write summaries their comprehension and content learning are enhanced (Bromley, 1992).

Teach strategies to work towards independence during reading.

"Several studies show that students who verbalize their reading strategies and thoughts while reading score significantly higher on comprehension tests." (Oster, 2001, p. 64)

"More effective teachers use modeling and explanation to teach students strategies for decoding words and understanding texts." (Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodriguez, 2002, p. 270)

The strategy cards on the next page may be reproduced and given to students to reinforce strategies while reading.

Primary teachers may want to photocopy the pages, laminate them, hole punch one corner, put them on a ring, and give one set to each student. Instructors would then model how to flip through the cards to find an appropriate strategy so students would learn to refer to the cards themselves. Eventually, the strategies would be embedded and students would not need to refer to the cards.

For students who don't speak English, the instructor could work with a translator to make similar cards in their native language. If this were done I would recommend having the student draw the illustrations themselves so they have a better connection to the card and enhanced memory of the strategy.

READING: STRATEGY CARDS

Before Reading: I Predict.	Before Reading: I look at the Pictures.	Before Reading: I think about what I already know.
During Reading: I stop and think about what I just read.	During Reading: I ask myself questions about what I just read.	During Reading: I predict again.
During Reading: I stop and tell someone about what I just read.	During Reading: I read it again if I don't understand.	After Reading: I share what I read with someone.

Please note: Content on this page was redacted due to copyright concerns.

After Reading: I draw a picture about what I read.	After Reading: I write in my journal.	After Reading: I read it again.

Adapted from: Strategy Access Rods: A hands-on approach. Bernadette Worthing, Barbara Laster. *The Reading Teacher*. Vol. 56, No. 2 October 2002

MODELED READING

TEACHER READ ALOUD: This provides students with the opportunity to hear a fluent reader. Story reading is especially important for students who are learning English since it helps them acquire language skills (Bromley, 1992). During interactive read alouds the teacher asks questions which helps students to make reading discoveries on their own (Gambrell & Almasi, 2002).

CROSS AGE PEERS: "It is through interactions with others – peers and adults- that children are able to expand their thinking, broaden their conceptual knowledge, and express themselves in language. "Wood, Roser, Martinez, 2001, p. 104)

Older students can read to younger students. Not only do the younger students get to hear an older model, the older students practice reading with voice inflection, and students often end up bonding with each other.

GUIDED READING

The practice of meeting with readers in small groups to provide guided reading instruction is a critical part of literacy programs designed to create independent, lifelong readers. (Cunningham, 2000; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Mooney, 1990).

"While...small-group work is at the hear of guided reading, it must not be seen as an end in itself...Small-group guided reading, as powerful as it is, must be understood as but one part of a comprehensive literacy program." (Routman, 2000. p.140)

The success of guided reading as an instructional practice depends on a classroom structure that provides teachers with opportunities to work with small groups while keeping other students engaged in meaningful work. (Kane, 1995.)

But what about my other students?

Teachers are often concerned about what their classes could be doing while they are working in guided reading groups. Several items on the following list are suggestions written by John Slagle, a consultant for Harcourt Supplemental Publishers. I have added suggestions that would be appropriate for intermediate classrooms.

Students can also read independently while teachers are working in small, guided reading groups. Author Karen Bromely argued; "The promotion of independent reading in the elementary school is critical for the development of life-long readers because it creates

enjoyment and enthusiasm for reading and develops the habit of reading." (Bromely,

1992, p. 226)

Reading Activities:	Writing Activities:
re-read familiar texts	journal writing
zoo books/Ranger Rick	writers workshop
Highlights	letter writing
Kids Discover	overhead writing
Time for Kids	quick writes
Buddy books – 2 copies per title	book reports
Student publish books	written retellings
Little House on the Prairie books	"what if..." questions
Junior Scholastic	four-part writing (flip book)
Wordly Wise	story maps
Reader Response	Write a new ending to a story

AFTER

READING

STRATEGIES

After Reading Purpose:

What students do after reading can be just as important as what they do before and during

the process. After reading the reader takes time to think about what he knew, what he

learned, and what connections he made during reading (Beers, 2000). "After reading,

teachers help students savor, share, and reconstruct meaning, and build connections to

further reading and writing." (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998, p. 33)

According to Beers, the purpose of post-reading strategies is to extend the reading

experience by helping the reader to:

- Reinforce the concept that the purpose of reading is to get meaning from text.

- Model ways of thinking through and organizing the information so that it makes

  sense. Graphic organizers and Thinking Maps® will assist in this area.

- Think critically about the text.

- Respond on a personal level. Wood & Savetti (2001) argued that a successful

  reading program includes time for follow-up discussions and retelling of stories.

  This encourages the students to go back over the story and then tell it in their own

  words.

After Reading Activities:

Use strategies from the following list to engage students in after reading activities.

Readers' Theater: "Readers' Theater is a form of oral interpretation in which students read from scripts." (Flood, Lapp, & Wood, 1997, p. 175) This is a great low risk way to get all of the students involved in a performance since students keep their scripts and do not have to memorize lines. (Flood, Lapp, & Wood, 1997)

Letters to the character: Write to a character to describe how you were alike or different. "We have all watched how excited a young child can become about a character in a book. It is this emotional response that is important to foster because it is the base from which interpretations and evaluations grow at all levels." (Bromley, 1992, p. 86)

Complete sequence charts: Use graphic organizers, story boards, or pocket charts to re-create the story in correct sequence. (Flood, Lapp, & Wood, 1997)

Search the Internet: After receiving a computer grant, I integrated technology into other academic areas. I found using technology after reading a story not only motivated my students, but also enabled them to extend their knowledge and understanding of what they read. I suggest students use the internet to research topics in the story they read in order to continue learning about that topic. This is especially helpful for nonfiction stories and provides an excellent way to integrate subject matter across curriculums.

Design an artifact: Use art supplies to create a setting, character, or event that depicts a key aspect of the story. Student created artwork such as pictures from books, maps, posters, props, and models reinforce concepts and engage the students in the text. (Flood, Lapp, & Wood, 1997)

Check predictions: Go back into the story to verify predictions. Check to see if your predictions were correct. If a Thinking Map, or graphic organizers were used, review what was written when the story was first introduced.

Create a book: This is especially useful with primary students who make a book and take it home to share with their parents. Not only do students review and reinforce what they read, they involve their parents in the learning process. (Routman, 2003) Creating books using a student's own version of a story also encourages creative expression and creative writing as well as improves comprehension of the text. (Flood, Lapp, & Wood, 1997)

Retell the story: "A retell is an oral or written composition that parallels a book or story." (Bromley, 1992, p. 88) Students must understand the story elements including setting, characters, theme, problem, and solution in order to effectively retell the story (Bromely, 1992). Retelling enhances comprehension as well as oral language development of readers (Cambourne, 1988). Cambourne (1988) describes six types of retelling as follows:

- o Oral-Oral: In this activity students listen and retell stories verbally.

- o Oral-Drawing: Primary age students can listen to a story and retell it by drawing pictures.

- o Oral-Writing: This is an appropriate activity for older students who are able to write. Students first listen to the story and then retell it in written form.

- o Written – Oral: This is similar to the above technique only students read the story themselves and then retell it in writing.

o Written – Drawing: Students read a story and retell it by drawing. Story maps are a good example of written-drawing retelling.

o Written – Written: Intermediate students are able to perform this activity in which they read the story and then retell it in writing.

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CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this project was to develop a resource guide to support minority students at the elementary grade level with learning difficulties in the area of reading by providing teachers with strategies they could utilize in the classroom to improve their instruction in order to better meet the needs of diverse learners in their classrooms.

The resource guide produced as a result of this project has detailed reading strategies which research has shown to be effective and which are currently accepted as best practices in literacy instruction.

Conclusions

As a result of this study, the following conclusions have been made:

1. An achievement gap does exist between minority and white students as is evidenced by state and district assessments.

2. Many of the factors contributing to the achievement gap are out of the educators' control, but high standards, a challenging curriculum, and quality teachers and effective teaching practices can help to reduce the achievement gap.

3. Teachers who utilize best practices in literacy instruction will see improvement in reading in all of their students.

4. Teaching students reading strategies enables them to become independent readers.

5. Teachers can help students develop an interest in reading by bonding with them and giving them the tools to improve their skills.

18

6. All students will benefit from quality literacy instruction.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations based on the results of this project:

1. Teachers should stay abreast of trends in literacy instruction to learn and utilize best practices in reading.

2. Administrators should be active instructional leaders who encourage the use of best practices in their buildings by:

- Funding staff development opportunities for reading instruction.

- Providing time for collegial sharing.

- Modeling effective teaching practices for teachers who are new or who have not kept up with current practices.

- Reading journals articles about reading instruction and sharing their knowledge with the staff.

- Working closely with Reading Specialists/Literacy Coaches to help implement changes in their buildings.

3. Teachers should teach students the necessary skills and strategies to become independent readers.

4. Parents should be educated in how to help their children become better readers.

5. High expectations should be set for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, or ability.

6.   Reading should be made a priority in the school schedule by providing adequate time for reading instruction.

7.   Multiple strategies should be implemented in the classroom including read aloud, shared reading, sustained silent reading, and others.

8.   English Language Learners should be included in general education guided reading classes whenever feasible.

9.   Professional development opportunities should be provided at the building level in order to enable teachers to stay abreast of current best practices.

10.   Teachers should be trained in the use of reading centers in order to free themselves up for small, guided reading groups.

11.   Principals and teachers should contact schools with similar demographics and ask what they are doing to improve reading instruction and test scores.

12.   A copy of this resource guide should be provided to teachers in the building as well as dedicated time to discuss the strategies in staff meetings or formal professional development classes.

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