

## RESPONSIVE TEACHING

Welcome to the first issue of *Lit Bits* for the 2007-2008 school year. As you explore this edition, you will notice that the purpose of the articles has shifted to reflect a focus on learning through excellence in responsive teaching. Our goal this year is to showcase articles that present solutions of practice.



Effective literacy instruction supports students as they move from novice to expert readers and writers, speakers and listeners, viewers and users of media. This year's literacy focus *from Knowing to Doing* is made actionable by using responsive literacy practices to lift each student.

We will participate throughout the year in conversations to unpack how the promise of scaffolded instruction can be fulfilled in every classroom to support every student.

Guiding questions will include the following challenges from Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe's book entitled Integrating Differentiated Instruction+Understanding by Design: Connecting Content and Kids.



*What should be the curricular "givens" in instructional planning?*

*How can teachers use classroom elements flexibly to support student success?*

*How can teachers make instructional planning more manageable and efficient?*

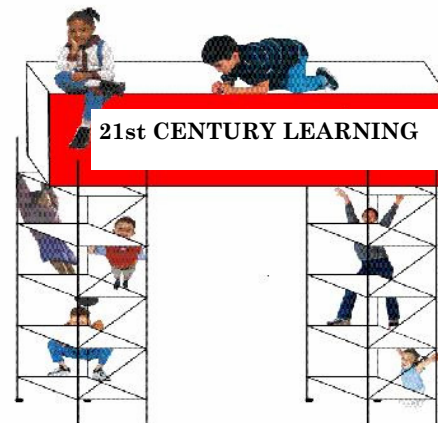
*How can teachers select instructional strategies that are responsive to student need?*

*How do teachers organize and manage their classrooms to support responsive instruction?*

*(Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006)*

## SIX KEY ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT SCAFFOLDING INSTRUCTION

- Analyzing student data to craft responsive instruction
- Using the data to set specific success targets for each student
- Implementing best practices that match the needs of each learner
- Designing the environment
- Organizing flexible groups and using time and space strategically based on instructional purposes
- Teacher self-reflection based on student learning and collaboration with others.



## Options for Scaffolding Student Learning

In the context of Professional Learning Communities, educators are strategizing how to support individual student achievement. Moving from *Knowing to Doing* requires analysis of formal and informal student data with the goal of matching instructional practice to purpose. This year, the literacy team hopes *Lit Bits* can include articles that showcase examples of student needs that may manifest themselves in a classroom, and provide potential remedies. As we craft future editions of *Lit Bits*, please consider submitting examples of best practices you have incorporated that have resulted in increased student learning.

If a student...	Then...
<b>READING</b>	
Has difficulty describing fix-up strategies used to support comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a think-aloud using one of the comprehension protocols</li> <li>• Invite the student to re-read the passage</li> <li>• Encourage the student to construct a question</li> </ul>
Relies on one or two strategies even when they don't support understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly identify when particular strategies that are taught are most helpful</li> <li>• Clarify whether a strategy is most supportive before, during, or after reading.</li> <li>• Provide practice with varied strategies aligned to varied purposes</li> </ul>
Doesn't recognize when he/she is not understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach reciprocal teaching so that the student can make better predictions, clarify meaning, develop questions, and focus on summarizing with guided support</li> </ul>
Doesn't remember important events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a graphic organizer such as a flow map, story map, or timeline to scaffold attention to detail</li> </ul>
<b>WRITING</b>	
Can't seem to get started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an open-ended question</li> <li>• Brainstorm possibilities in a small group</li> <li>• Use mentor texts to stimulate ideas</li> </ul>
Uses words repetitively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate a synonym continuum</li> <li>• Post word walls</li> <li>• Encourage the student to create a personal word bank</li> <li>• Encourage the student to select a word buddy</li> </ul>
Has writing that is stilted and lacks personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the student read his/her writing out loud</li> <li>• Use a language experience approach and script the student's conversation as he/she shares a personal narrative</li> <li>• Perform read alouds of short vivid prose and poetry to showcase the power of words to evoke emotion</li> </ul>
<b>VOCABULARY</b>	
Has difficulty finding the "just right" word in writing and oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try the "shades of meaning" protocol</li> </ul>
Has difficulty keeping key features of related concepts straight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize the concepts using a semantic feature analysis</li> </ul>
<b>ORAL COMMUNICATION</b>	
Responds in single words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double-check to make sure the question is a higher level question that requires critical thinking</li> </ul>
Rarely participates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional wait time</li> <li>• Select students randomly using a "popsicle" pull</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for think-pair-share to allow rehearsal time before whole group participation</li> </ul>

## MINORITY STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT NETWORK HOSTS ADOLESCENT LITERACY MINI CONFERENCE

Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District is hosting an Adolescent Literacy Mini Conference November 8-9, 2007 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Beachwood, Ohio. Assistant Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack organized the event in collaboration with the MSAN Literacy sub-committee including Laura Cooper from Evanston, Bernice Stokes from Shaker Heights, and Robin Sorenson from Windsor. The conference will focus on Adolescent Literacy with an emphasis on best practices for students of color.

The conference promises to initiate an MSAN Practitioner Group to consult in an ongoing way on problems of practice related to Adolescent Literacy. Participants will collaborate with expert presenters, discuss promising practices, and develop topics requiring additional research. Key topics to be explored include the role of literacy coaches and literacy teams, high yield literacy assessments, and literacy models and practices that best serve under-performing students.

Author and presenter Dr. Yvette Jackson who currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of the National Urban Alliance and Dr. Michelle V. Porche, research scientist and co-author of *Is Literacy Enough?* will present during the conference.

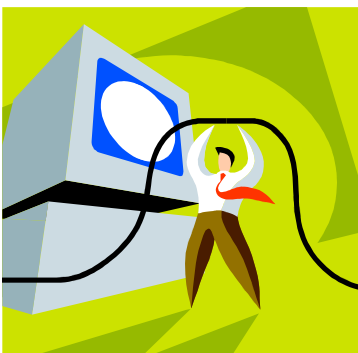


### Prescription for Fourth Grader Builds on Student's Strengths

Sarah, a fourth grader, is striving to become an intermediate reader. She is independently using a variety of strategies when reading easy material. While reading orally, she uses appropriate expression. However, once presented with grade level text, her reading slows down, she begins to read aloud, and her duration of attention shortens.

One goal for this reader could be knowing the purpose for reading a variety of reading material. By demonstrating that different texts necessitate different levels of interaction with the words, she will learn to approach each reading experience with a plan in mind. For example, teaching her to skim and scan the social studies section before reading will help her identify the topic, subtopics, and details. Providing a graphic organizer to record the information learned during the preview of the material will further help her understand what is important. Recommended preparatory activities include reading the back cover, looking at the table of contents, previewing pictures and chapter titles. Discussing how this preparation for reading is similar to preparation for reading recreational materials will help her build on her strengths.

### Establishing Cyber Conversations to Lift Literacy Learning



*"Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge.*

*That's what we're doing."*

*-Jimmy Wales, Wikipedia founder (Wales, 2004)*

The word wiki is an abbreviation for the Hawaiian word wiki-wiki meaning "quick." When Ward Cunningham built the first wiki in 1995, he was looking for a quick and easy way for people to publish on the web.

A wiki provides an opportunity for anyone to edit anytime they want. (Think Wikipedia.) The knowledge of each person who visits a site can be added and subsequently influences the knowledge available to others.

In order to support collaboration across the district relevant to our literacy focus this year, we have established a wiki site on [www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com). It is called *responsiveteaching*. The resources found on this site are designed to share literacy practices that support each learner. Come visit and add your ideas. If you need more information before jumping on board, a very simple set of directions can be found on TeacherTube at <http://www.teachertube.com/> by searching the title, "Wikis in Plain English." A brief cartoon will guide you through a tutorial.



## Villages of Hope Ambassador Visits CH-UH District

Cynthia "Mama J" Johnson, a national consultant, writer, and accomplished educator spoke at Wiley Auditorium on Friday, October 26, 2007. Ms. Johnson shared her own childhood experiences and inspired every person to make a difference in a child's life. In her personal approach to the day, *Mama J* made each participant feel connected to her and each other. Her message inspired the audience of educators to act on the belief that all students can achieve. She challenged us to tear down barriers to success and provide rigor for all students.

As a current middle school principal at Grandview Middle School in Missouri, *Mama J* shared her vision for every student to feel empowered to achieve his or her full potential. Her practical suggestions laid the foundation for this very important work.

Cynthia Johnson is currently a doctoral candidate in *Educational Leadership* at the Baker University in Overland Park, Kansas. Her research focus is closing the achievement gap with diverse populations. She is conducting a workshop on this topic during the National Middle School Association Conference in Houston, Texas in November.

### Reflections on Mama J's Message

by Kelly Simon and Karen Heinsbergen

#### Questions to ask ourselves:

- How do we reach the youth?
- How do we teach the youth?
- How do we lead the youth?
- How do we succeed with the youth?

#### First Steps:

- Build relationship with students, families, and communities
- Ensure caring and believing environments
- Hold high and consistent expectations
- Differentiate instruction ("One size does not fit all")
- Ask the key questions
- Tear down barriers to good instruction
- Restructure time and space for flexible education
- Establish small collaborative communities
- Make AYP the *floor* and not the ceiling
- Teach with confidence

#### Challenge:

"How are our teaching practices impacted if we make actionable our belief that ALL students can learn at HIGH levels?"



*A key message in her presentation was to generate hope and belief in children by making a difference where you can rather than blaming. She illustrated the fruitlessness of blame with an entertaining poem:*

### WHOSE FAULT IS IT? CERTAINLY NOT MINE . . .

The college professor said,  
"Such wrong in the student is a shame,  
Lack of preparation in high school is to blame."  
Said the high school teacher,  
"Good heavens, that boy is a fool.  
The fault, of course, is with the middle school."  
The middle school teacher said,  
"From such stupidity may I be spared,  
They send him to me so unprepared."  
The elementary teacher said,  
"The kindergartners are block-heads all.  
They call it preparation; why, it's worse than none  
at all."  
The kindergarten teacher said,  
"Such lack of training never did I see,  
What kind of mother must that woman be."  
The mother said,  
"Poor helpless child, he's not to blame  
For you see, his father's folks are all the same."  
Said the father,  
at the end of the line,  
"I doubt the rascal's even mine!"

--Anonymous  
Printed in the *English Journal*