



LIT BITS

Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District

Balanced Literacy Taskforce Kickoff

One of our key District priorities is Balanced Literacy. Snow, ice and freezing temperatures postponed the kickoff meeting of our newly revitalized Balanced Literacy Taskforce which was scheduled to meet on January 27th. The rescheduled date is for the morning of February 23rd at Taylor. Each school in the District will be represented on this day with a dynamic duo. The pair will include a principal, and a literacy liaison who will represent the staff. Together, they will provide leadership for the development of *literacy teams*. They will support each staff's commitment to increasing student achievement through improving literacy skills

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Centers in Tamera Bishko's First Grade Classroom at Gearity



Students in Tamera Bischko's class are making words with word tiles. Students use the appropriate letter tiles to make words and match them with the correct picture tiles. After making the words with the tiles on the chalkboard, students record the words with a pencil in their word notebooks.

KEY FEBRUARY DATES

- February 25, 2004
Balanced Literacy Committee
8:00-11:30 Taylor
- February 24, 2004
Title Teachers 11:30-1:30
All reading teachers: 1:30-3:30
- February 25, 2004
Dibels Training- Rdg Teachers
Taylor: 8:30-3:30

GEARITY GOSSIP

Congratulations to second grade teachers, Carolyn Lorber and Angela Palcisko. They have already given their classes the reading portion of the Ohio Diagnostic Test!

Karen Weisman's kindergarten class wrote a book about the *Hungry Thing* and they recorded their book for their listening center.

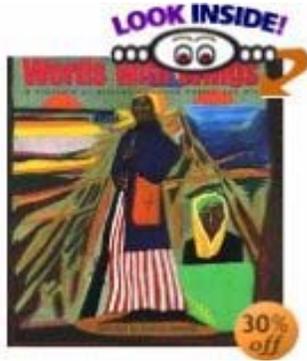
First grade teachers, Nancy Machmer and Tammi Bishko are doing a great job implementing learning centers in their classrooms.



Words with Wings

A Treasury of African-American Poetry and Art

Selected by Belinda Rochelle



WORDS WITH WINGS
A Beautiful Book to Add to
Your Library

Editor Belinda Rochelle pairs 20 poems by African American poets with twenty works of art by African American artists in this wonderful collection. The book also features mini-biographies of the selected poets and artists in the back of the book. In addition to editing this wonderful book, Belinda Rochelle is the author of the picture books *When Jo Louis Won the Title* and *Jewels*. She also wrote the non-fiction book entitled *Witnesses to Freedom: Young People who Fought for Civil Rights*.

Boulevard's Banner

The leveled bookroom at Boulevard is beginning to become a reality. The location has been decided and Angela and Carol along with the building reading specialists have been working on organizing the room. This is a dream soon to become a reality!

Books and Breakfast has been coming along successfully. Third grade readers are showing a great

interest in informational text. Right before winter break, the students were given a book to take home and keep. The book, *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain is a delightful word book about feelings and emotions. After a discussion about the many feelings we all experience, the children were anxious to take the book home to share with family and friends.

Sharlene Warner Organizes Coventry's Leveled Book Collections



Sharlene Warner is leading the development of Coventry's Book Room. Though the book closet was started before she arrived, she is moving the collection to a new level to increase opportunities for teachers to collaboratively share leveled books. Sharlene went on a field trip initiated by Kay Milkie to visit bookrooms at Shaker. The field trip was attended by various program specialists and administrators.

Taneesha's Treasures of the Heart

by M. LaVora Perry

There is a new local African American author in our area. M. LaVora Perry, grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and graduated from Cleveland State University's College of Education.

Her book, *Taneesha's Treasures of the Heart*, is a story of true friendship and how faith can make fear disappear. The problem of bullies is addressed in this book. This novel provides an introduction to the Buddhist religion. The story is prefaced with "A Note to Readers" which addresses the universality of the great wish for peace and happiness in our world.

This fictional story has a variety of interesting features: a glossary of Buddhist words, a "Victory Over Violence" explanation, "Healthy Habits" to prevent diabetes (because one of the characters has diabetes), and a list of "Books for Children, Teens, Parents, Teachers, and Others."

M. LaVora Perry also gives her website



Author, M. LaVora Perry
with Noble student and parent

*"When you're navigating by
the wrong stars, pulling harder
on the oars won't get you to
your destination."*

C. Finn

TEN ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS NEEDED FOR STRUGGLING READERS

(Outlined by Irene Fountas during her Keynote Address at Reading Recovery)

1. High Quality Preschool Programs- Programs where children are exposed to literacy activities such as name charts, read-alouds, magnetic letters, concepts of print, shared reading and book handling.
2. Effective Early Intervention- Giving children a second chance before it's too late
3. Good Classroom Teaching- Struggling readers are dependent on good classroom teaching. They need to expand oral language competencies along with excellent literacy instruction..
4. Cohesive Coordinated Supplementary Services- Classroom teachers and supplemental teachers must be on the same page meeting the needs of the individual students. Both teachers

must work hand in hand to address the needs of students.

5. A range of instructional Materials- There should be a range of leveled books available to support independent reading, instructional reading and read-alouds. These books should represent multiple genres.
6. Instructional time should be used effectively and efficiently. Time on task and efficient planning are crucial.
7. Careful Observation- The instructional program must provide opportunities for observation of students with opportunities to make anecdotal notes.

8. Struggling Readers Need to be Monitored- Teachers must guide and assure the progress of all children but particularly the neediest.

9. High Expectations- Teachers need to have high expectations for struggling readers. They shouldn't label children.

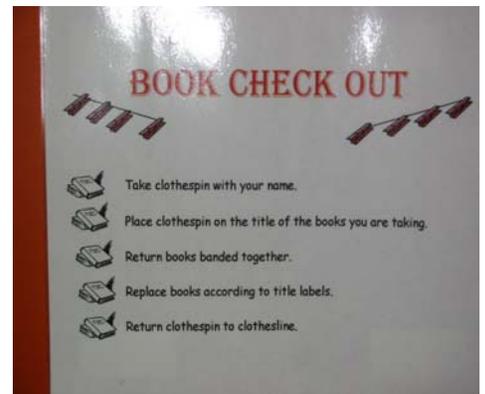
10. Professional Expertise- This is the most important factor in guiding student achievement.



CANTERBURY TALES

Serena Edwards recently had Canterbury's new leveled bookroom painted. The PTA has offered to purchase some new bookshelves for the room.

Kay organized a field trip with program specialists, the literacy coordinator and principals to visit leveled bookrooms in Shaker Heights. Loretta Martin, literacy specialist from Shaker Heights, hosted the activity. The Book Check Out poster helped teachers regulate their own checkout of materials.



"If we only listen to our intellect, we'd never have a love affair. We'd never have a friendship. We'd never go into business because we'd be cynical. Well, that's nonsense. You've got to jump off cliffs all the time, and build your wings on the way down."

Ray Bradbury



Testing Schedule

March Testing

Achievement, Diagnostic Writing, Off-Grade, Proficiency, and OGT Testing will commence in March. The dates are as follows:

Grade	Test	Date
1,2,3	Diagnostic Writing	March 8
3	Reading Achievement	March 10
3	Off-Grade Math	March 12
3	Off-Grade Citizenship	March 15
3	Off-Grade Science	March 17
4/6	Proficiency Writing	March 8
4/6	Proficiency Reading	March 10
4/6	Proficiency Math	March 12
4/6	Proficiency Citizenship	March 15
4/6	Proficiency Science	March 17
5	Off-Grade Math	March 10
5	Off-Grade Science	March 12
5	Practice Citizenship Proficiency	March 15
7	Off-Grade Math	March 10
7	Off-Grade Science	March 12
8	Off-Grades (all)	March 1-5
10-12	9th Grade Proficiency	March 1-5
10	OGT –Reading/Math	March 16-17

*Make-up sessions follow each testing schedule.



Interventions in Full Swing

Various intervention programs for our students are in full swing. Heights Cub Club hosts students in grades 1 and 2. Each elementary school has at least three classes with a total enrollment of approximately 165 students. This program focuses on helping our students develop their reading skills. Every child has been screened using Dibels (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). Dibels will be used at the end of the program to track the growth of each student.

Young Achievers' Academy for 3rd and 4th grade students has enrollment of 180 students representing each elementary school. Students are bused to Wiley for eight Saturdays where they receive preparation in reading and math in a small class setting. New materials have been purchased using funding from a state intervention grant. Many elementary schools have been very creative and are providing extra educational opportunities for our students.

Exciting intervention programs are in progress at Monticello, Roxboro, and Wiley. These programs were designed to meet the unique needs of the students at each middle school and range from after school sessions at Monticello and Wiley focusing on math, citizenship/reading, to an evening program at Roxboro that covers citizenship, math, reading, and science. Approximately 225 students are involved in these programs. Evaluations of each program will be conducted to determine their effectiveness. Thank you to all who are helping our students.

Interactive Writing: A Powerful Instructional Technique for Emergent and Beginning Writers

by Kay Milkie

Writing is an integral part of a balanced literacy framework. However, writing for, with, and by children will sometimes look different at various stages of literacy development. At the emergent and beginning stages of writing development, interactive writing can be a particularly powerful instructional technique. The teacher and the children “share the pen” to construct a meaningful text.

Interactive writing begins with a shared experience such as a field trip, class visitor, unit of study, or read aloud. The teacher and children then work together to negotiate a written piece that will be completed cooperatively. The authentic piece could be a list, sentence, poem, story, etc. The teacher then asks the children to articulate the sounds in each word of the piece. As the beginning sound of the first word is articulated, the teacher asks one child to

use the marker to write the letter or letters that represent that particular sound on chart paper. The teacher may choose to write entire words or parts of words during interactive writing depending on the stage of development of the children. The teacher and children continue taking turns writing until the product is complete and the words in the piece have been reread repeatedly. This may take place in 20 minutes or over the period of several days. The completed written piece can be displayed in the classroom for reading and writing done throughout the day.

Interactive writing provides opportunities for children to:

- Plan and construct text
- Make connections between oral and written language
- Practice high frequency words
- Learn and practice phonics and spelling skills
- Successfully read and write

texts that could not be done independently

- Receive explicit instruction about language conventions, types of writing, and concepts about print
- Share reading and writing expertise with classmates

Tina Reynolds and Kay Milkie began implementing interactive writing in Tina’s kindergarten classroom. An animal unit and the reading aloud of *Polar Bear, Polar Bear What do you hear?* provided the shared experiences. Tina, Kay, and the children then created a list of animals on chart paper using the interactive writing technique. The list was used as a reference for further lessons.

If you are interested in dabbling with interactive writing and would like input, please contact Kay Milkie at 320-2035 or via district email.



Noble had a Literacy Night on the evening of Thursday, January 8th. It was very well attended. Irene Mihevic, Title I Reading Specialist, presented a powerpoint on the importance of reading with your child. Beth Goldberg, building reading specialist, did a winter project with the children that attended. There was also a storytelling presentation by one of Mrs. Mihevic's personal friends. M. LaVora Perry, author of *Taneesha's Treasures of the Heart*, had a table set up for selling and autographing books. Mrs. Perry did writing workshops at Noble for the third through fifth grades during the week of January 5. She inspired the students to write, write, write!

VIDEO FOR RENT!

Debbie Miller's book entitled Reading for Meaning is possibly the most important book to be recently published in the world of elementary reading comprehension. The District owns the three tape set that serves as a companion piece to this book entitled Happy Reading. Why not borrow these video tapes and consider sharing movie moments with a group of your colleagues? The series includes a viewing guide with graphic organizers to support your conversations. Contact your building's literacy specialist to borrow these materials.



Irene Mihevic Presents a Powerpoint Presentation with Tips for Parents to Promote Reading and Writing



Beth Gold-



LIT BITS is a monthly publication produced by staff members committed to promoting literacy.