



# Lit Bits

Cleveland  
Heights-  
University  
Heights

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## LITERACY INITIATIVES 2005-2006

by Helen Hirsch, Coordinator of Literacy

Welcome to the 2005-2006 school year! Thanks to the committed professionals throughout the district, we are making a positive difference in the lives of children as we work together to develop each student's literacy.

Two major initiatives drive our work this year: empowering students with reading comprehension strategies to negotiate text, and supporting the writing process through instruction aligned with 6 Traits, teacher-student conferences and writing workshop. These robust goals will require effort from multiple stakeholders:

- Literacy coaches are supporting building level literacy teams by partnering in brainstorming and co-providing embedded professional development opportunities.
- Electronic resources aligned to our initiatives are being posted throughout the year on our district's literacy web-site. <http://www.chuh.org/Literacy/main.lasso>
- Staff development offerings related to literacy goals are being planned. Our next offering is scheduled for after school on November 1st for K-5 teachers at Taylor from 2:30-4:30.
- Adolescent task force members are being trained to become SIRI A instructors to increase the potential for building level professional development in the middle schools, small schools at the high school, and Bellefaire.
- A reading resource manual has been assembled and distributed to every teacher of English Language Arts. Media Specialists and principals will also receive a copy. This manual includes research-based protocols for each of the six comprehension strategies.
- Working folders are being constructed for students in grades 3 through 12 to promote the love of writing and to support teacher-student writing conferences.

## COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Our literacy focus this year includes supporting readers with six types of comprehension strategies. The strategies were selected based on the work of Ellin Oliver Keene and Susan Zimmermann, the authors of *Mosaic of Thought*. This book is recognized as the hallmark professional resource related to supporting meaning-making in text. (Note: Susan Zimmermann is a featured presenter on November 14th.) We have placed these strategies into the calendar of our school to support professional development planning. Language Arts/English teachers have received a red binder containing protocols to support strategic comprehension instruction.

## Food, Facts and Fun at Fall Feast

Our annual Title I Fall Dinner Meeting was held on September 27th at Wiley Middle School from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Families from all eight elementary schools enjoyed a delicious meal prior to presentations by Helen Hirsch, Coordinator of Literacy, and Jennifer Bennett, Teacher Leader. Helen and Jen shared methods of promoting literacy and photos of children engaged in reading instruction. Families received a copy of *Read and Rise* a publication jointly produced by Scholastic, State Farm, and The National Urban League. During the breakout sessions families participated in activities with their child's teacher. Activities included working with words, performing a reader's theater script about comprehension skills, and designing bookmarks. Each child went home with a brand new book!



Students making and writing words during breakout sessions

!!!Sfbc!291;!!

b!291!E fhsff!Uwso Bspvoe!

Read 180, an intervention program for struggling readers, utilizes computer software, small group instruction, and independent reading rotations to improve reading achievement. There are ten labs in the district, including all three middle schools, two elementary schools and the high school.



Boulevard and Oxford have experienced much success with their fourth grade students. Children are excited about reading and eager to advance to new levels on the computer software. During Stacey Brown's open house, some children were on the program and during her presentation a child called out, "I made it to the Success Zone!" The Success Zone is a culminating part of the computer instruction that can be entered only after completion of three other components. Arrival is an exhilarating phase of the Read 180 student's experience.



Monticello students formulated goals during the first two weeks of school and to their amazement some of the students have already reached their target for the number of books they anticipated reading in a full school year.

Karen Sandercock, one of two Read 180 teachers at the high school, recounted a story of a student who did not want to stop reading his book at the end of the independent reading rotation. Although interested in the computer software, on that particular day, he was so engrossed in his reading choice, that he announced to all he did not want to stop reading. What a remarkable testimony!



Expectations are being exceeded on a daily basis as students meet with success and receive instruction tailored to their needs.



Ufodi fst!Mfbso!Upp!

!

October 11, Tammi Ledenko, from Scholastic, facilitated the second day of training for Read 180 teachers. The focus of this day was investigating the reports and the data available from the Read 180 software component of the program. Additionally, successes and great tips for implementation were shared.

A supportive component of the program is an ongoing assessment that yields a lexile level. This number helps teachers and readers find the text match best for the student. Teachers at this session became more familiar with a district resource that supports generating non-fiction text aligned to lexiles across content areas. The resource is called SIRS Discoverer Deluxe, and can be reached with the following link: <http://www.chuh.org/resources/action.lasso>

Within the program, teachers have access to quizzes for books students read independently, and a strong feature is the ability for teachers to create their own assessments and add them to the database for sharing. There is also a feature that lists 32,000 books identified by lexile that can be sorted by genre.



## Kindergarten Campers Enjoy CHAMP CAMP '05

Champ Camp was held again this year for our students who would be entering first grade in the fall. Camp was held at Coventry School from August 1 to August 19. Sixty-four students representing all eight elementary school attended Camp where they focused on literacy skills that combined reading and writing activities. Students visited the Coventry Neighborhood Library each week and were able to listen to stories, sing songs, and take out books to read at home. Each class went to the computer lab to participate in various reading activities. Three themes focused student learning: *All About Me*, *Animals* and *Let's Start School*.

Students, teachers, and parents enjoyed the program. Fourteen students had perfect attendance and fourteen students were absent only one day. At the conclusion of the program each student received a certificate, bookmark, and book to add to their personal library. Parent evaluations were very positive. They loved the individual attention children received. Many expressed that their child developed a new interest in reading and had a newly found confidence. The collaborative effort made this program a positive experience for our students and families. A special thanks to Karen Frantz who coordinated the effort!



## New State Achievement Tests Debut in '06



In March, another round of new state achievement tests will debut. This year the new tests will be as follows:

- Grade 4 - Math Achievement
- Grade 5 - Math Achievement
- Grade 6 - Math and Reading Achievement
- Grade 7 - Reading Achievement

These tests will join their co-stars already featured in grades 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8. The high school will continue to administer the OGT to 10<sup>th</sup> graders and to eleventh graders who need to pass any part of the OGT. Next year, the state testing schedule will be complete when science and social studies are added to grades 5 and 8. Stay tuned!

## District Achieves "Continuous Improvement" Status

CU-UH made significant academic progress this past year and moved into "Continuous Improvement" status on the State of Ohio's Local Report Card since we achieved a Performance Index score of 87.2. The Performance Index is a summary measure of test performance for all test areas at all tested grade levels based on the number of students at each performance level. The PI can range between 0 to 120. Scoring between 80-89 places a district into Continuous Improvement. Four schools, Noble, Oxford, Roxboro Elementary, and Heights High, achieved a rating of "Effective" because they received a score between 90 and 99. Oxford and Heights High improved by two categories over their 2004 rating. Eight of our schools have been recognized by the State Board of Education as high performing schools, and the district was also recognized as a high performing district. The schools who received this recognition were Boulevard, Noble,

Oxford, Roxboro Elementary, Monticello, Roxboro Middle School, Wiley, and Heights High.

Additionally, the district made AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). AYP is a designation that holds schools accountable for achievement for all students in math and reading. AYP is required for all subgroups with a minimum of 30 members, and a minimum of 45 students for students with disabilities.

The district made gains in many test areas. The following are highlights:

- 81.3% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders performed at or above proficient on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Achievement Test.
- 62.5% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders passed the math proficiency test compared to 48.8% in 2004.
- 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade made gains in all test areas except writing where they were already performing above the state target of 75%.

- Most special education students scored advanced or accelerated and the remainder proficient on the alternate assessment.
- The high school achieved a 99% participation rate for the OGT.
- OGT Math scores rose from 50.3% to 76.8% in 2005.
- OGT Reading scores skyrocketed from 67.7% to 91.6% in 2005.

Our successes demonstrate that focused attention on academic achievement can produce dramatic, positive results. We are pleased and proud of the academic accomplishments of students and look forward to continued progress. We also appreciate that our work is incomplete until all students are achieving at high levels. The positive step in the right directions reassures us that believing in students yields positive results!

## Extra, Extra: Read All About It

by Lisa Krok

**“As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.”**

by Marianne Williamson :  
*A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of a Course in Miracles*



3rd grade students, Angel and Lucas read about soccer.

Did you know that *The Plain Dealer* publishes a weekly newspaper just for kids? The “Mini Pages” are included near the comics section of the paper every Sunday. Topics include soccer, presidents, moms, plants, penguins, being left-handed, and more. I save the Mini Pages each Sunday and laminate them for durability. I display them on a horizontal rack in the reading corner in my classroom. They are a big hit with my students and help motivate them to explore other sources of information. Remember to check your paper this Sunday!



Meleea chooses a paper from the newspaper stand.

## Gearity’s Fall Literacy & Math Night

On the night of October 19<sup>th</sup>, the Gearity School Community hosted the Fall Literacy & Math Night. Divided into two sessions, families learned the importance of math in everyday experiences, as well as the importance of reading aloud to children.

Thanks to the dedication of the Gearity Literacy Team, families learned ways to encourage and support literacy development in the home environment. The night began with Kristen Abdow, reading teacher, sharing with families a variety of ideas that can be used with children to instill a love for reading and writing. Sharlene Warner, media specialist, then provided families with a brief tour of the CH-UH Public Library’s website and demonstrated for parents the way to pick the “just right” book by using the 5 finger method. Families were then able to listen to stories read by classroom teachers, Caren Weisman and Mary Nemes, as they modeled for families different ways to interact with stories to engage children during a read aloud.

To end the literacy session, Principal Sherri Miller gifted each family with their own copy of *When My Momma Reads to Me*. From the smiles on the children’s faces to the warm thanks of appreciation from families, one could tell that this was a special night for the Gearity School Community.



# A Sampling of Featured Speakers

Professional Development Day- November 14, 2005

**Dr. Willard R. Daggett** is President of the International Center for Leadership in Education. He is known worldwide for his efforts to move the education system towards more rigorous and relevant skills and knowledge for all students. Dr. Daggett has held both teaching and administrative positions at the secondary, two-year college, four-year liberal arts college and university levels. He serves as the lead consultant for the International Center's network of highly successful model schools committed to rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students. These experiences give him a practical, broad-based perspective to the issues facing education.

Dr. Daggett has worked on school reform initiatives in several states as well as with education ministries and educational institutions in other countries. He also serves as a consultant to many business organizations. He has addressed audiences in all 50 states and overseas. Dr. Daggett is the author of 12 textbooks, four books on educational reform, numerous research reports, and many articles in professional publications. He is well known as the designer of the Application Model, which provides a framework to determine the relevance of curriculum and assessment to real-world situations. The Application Model is part of the Rigor/Relevance Framework, which has become a cornerstone of reform initiatives throughout the world.

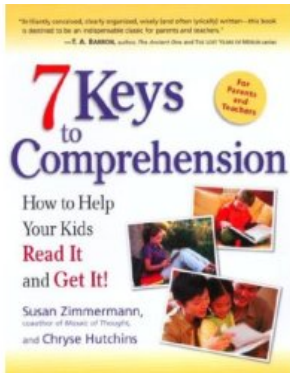
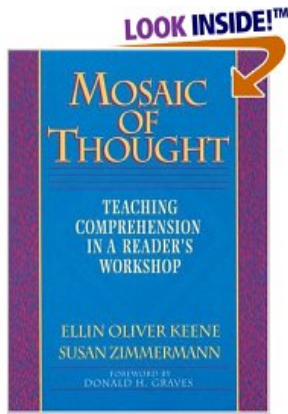


**Dr. Eric Cooper** is the President of the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education (NUA) at The Council of Great City Schools, Washington, DC and The University of Alabama, Birmingham. He served in a similar position as Executive Director for the NUA at Columbia University's Teachers College and as Adjunct Associate Professor for 7 years. Prior to this position, he was the Vice President for In-service Training & Telecommunications, Simon Schuster Education Group. He has worked with The College Board as the Associate Director of Program Development, has been an administrative assistant in the Office of Curriculum, Boston Public Schools, a director of a treatment center for emotionally disturbed students, a teacher, researcher, counselor, and Washington Fellow. Additional professional activities include: producer of educational documentaries and talk shows; producer for the Public Broadcasting Service; congressional testimony for House committees; presentations for federal and state educational agencies; advisor to the International Reading Association; and for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

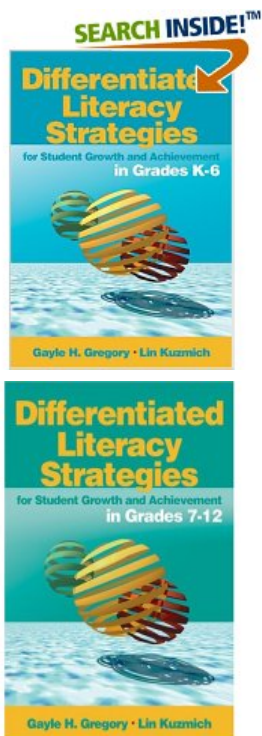


His publications include *Teaching All the Children: Strategies for Developing Literacy in an Urban Setting*; *Reading, Thinking & Concept Development*, *Educating Black Children: America's Challenge*.

He is cofounder of the Urban Partnership for Literacy with the International Reading Association; is working with the National Council of Teachers of English to support improvements in urban education, and collaborates with the Council of Great City Schools. He maintains an irrefutable belief in the capacity of all schoolchildren and youth to succeed at the highest academic levels.

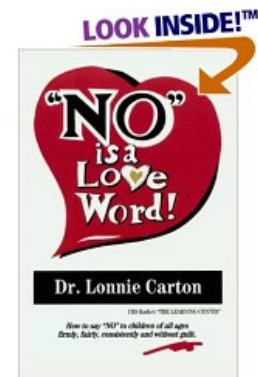


**Dr. Lonnie Carton**, a family therapist and educational consultant, serves as chief information officer for WARM2KIDS, a web-based family and school support system. She was the director of Family Support Services for Boston Partners in Education, and currently serves as its consultant. She hosted the nationally syndicated feature "Take a Minute for the Family" on the CBS-Radio network and is the author of *NO is a Love Word!* Dr. Carton served as senior editor of *Education Today*, a nationally-distributed publication for families of school-aged children.



**Susan Zimmermann** is the coauthor of *Mosaic of Thought*, the quintessential book on reading comprehension. Noted author, speaker, and workshop leader, Susan Zimmermann co-founded and served as the executive director of the Denver-based Public Education and Business Coalition, a public/private partnership that mobilizes business support and involvement in public education. During her ten years there, she started numerous programs to improve the quality of public schools, including the Writing and Reading Projects -- implemented in over one hundred Colorado schools -- which provide the examples in her books *Mosaic of Thought* (Ellin Oliver Keene and Susan Zimmermann, Heinemann 1997) and *7 Keys to Comprehension* (Susan Zimmermann and Chryse Hutchins, Three Rivers Press 2003). These educational bestsellers present new and innovative teaching paradigms based on thinking strategies used by proficient readers.

**Chryse Hutchins** is a national and international reading consultant who has been a staff developer for Denver's Public Education and Business Coalition for 14 years. She has worked as a staff developer in Cris Tovani's classroom. Chryse has also been an adjunct professor of literacy at the University of Denver. The book *7 Keys to Comprehension* which she co-authored with Susan Zimmermann, is based on cutting edge research and more than 10 years of application in hundreds of classrooms. Her 7 keys are in perfect alignment with the six strategies in our district literacy plan. The seventh key refers to "fix up strategies."



**Lin Kuzmich** is the assistant superintendent for Thompson School District in Loveland, Colorado, where she has also served as executive director of instruction, as director of professional development, and for nine years as a principal. Before joining the Loveland District, Lin was a classroom teacher. She taught special education and reading PreK-12, high school reading, and middle school language arts, and she was also an elementary school classroom teacher, earning the Teacher of the Year Award for Denver Public Schools in 1979. For the past 10 years Lin has been involved in professional development, teaching classes at several universities, providing training for agencies and school districts throughout the United States, and authoring journal articles and government and regional publications. Her recent work has focused on data-driven instruction, standards-based education, supervision and evaluation of teachers, and data-driven school improvement planning.