



LLRC

Language - Literacy Reading Connections



**The Newsletter of the
Lancaster Lebanon
Reading Council
Winter, 2010**



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Loving What You Do

Dear LLRC Members:

As I am writing this article, the winds are blowing and the snow is falling. We are up against quite the snowstorm with blizzard-like conditions.

The frightful weather reminds me of the unpredictable situations we all encounter in our everyday work. One day, it might be a sick child who should not have been sent to school but shows up. Another day, it might be a parent who expresses anger in your direction, for no apparent reason. On still another day, it might be an administrator defining parameters for a new direction for your school.

Daily stresses impact us and sometimes, we become overwhelmed by it all. These storms of life can be mild or severe. Juggling our emotions and staying calm through it all, requires us to put one foot in front of the other and keep on walking down that path of life.

As I look outside and see the beauty of the newly fallen snow, it reminds me of the reasons I choose to do what I do. The serenity of the untouched landscape reminds me of the minds of students that are open to learning new things. The quietness in the air reminds me of the time we offer for reflection on learning. Think time is important time. The closing of schools and businesses reminds me that we do need to take a break from it all, from time to time. Snow days provide us with a chance to escape reality and sometimes, a few hours away can do one a world of good. The fact that no two snowflakes are alike reminds me of the fact that no two students are alike. Every individual is beautiful in some way and it is so important for us to remember that when we become frustrated by our current realities.

As you reflect on your current situation, I hope you take the

time to remember why you chose this profession. I am guessing part of your decision to pursue education was connected to a strong desire to help children grow under your guidance. I also imagine that passion and excitement can be used to describe your commitment to our field. Sometimes, we might question our career choices. I think it is healthy to question as long as reflection is your response to questioning. As winter turns to spring, remember that each season has good times and bad. Just remember, loving what you do will make doing what you do a little bit easier.

Yours in Literacy,

Beth Puschak, President LLRC



Upcoming Events

Our spring event will feature Mary Ellen Vogt, a past president of the International Reading Association. The date has been set for April 21, 2010. The topic of this presentation will be: "Academic Vocabulary: Engaging Activities for All Learners" Look for the flyer that has been sent electronically to all members. You can

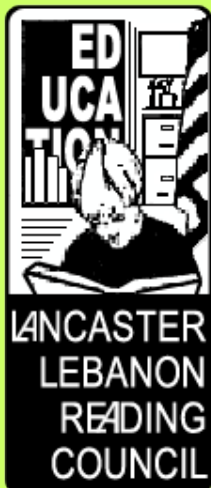
also visit our website to see the flyer: www.llrc.org

In response to our survey, we will be trying something new in June. We will have a picnic for member networking at Governor Dick Park in Lebanon. More details will follow.

For our fall event this year, LLRC joined with three other

reading councils for a Region 4 event. We are happy to announce that another Regional Conference will take place next spring. Shane Templeton and Jack Pikulski will be our speakers on March 11, 2011. This event will be held in Harrisburg as it is the most centrally located place for all four Councils.

Hope you can join us!



LLRC Participates in Pennies for Peace by June Shultz

Members of the Lancaster-Lebanon Reading Council have joined hands with tens of thousands of other organizations and schools around the world who share the vision and dedication to empower communities through education in remote areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. LLRC members will broaden cultural horizons and join a global family dedicated to peace.

How can a penny bring peace? One penny doesn't buy much in the United States. In Pakistan and Afghanistan, a penny can buy a pencil, start an education, and transform a life. In a region where terrorist organizations recruit uneducated, illiterate children, that pencil can empower a child to read, write, and learn. The Pennies for Peace program goal is to encourage others to learn the value of philanthropy by collecting pennies for global peace.

The Pennies for Peace campaign is a program of Central Asia Institute, founded by Greg Mortenson, author of the number one New York Times best-seller, *Three Cups of Tea*.

LLRC encourages members and others to support this project through a Pennies for Peace collection time. The pennies we collect can make a real difference in the lives of children who live in other parts of the world.

Look how those pennies can add up:

1 penny buys one pencil

3 pennies buy an eraser

15 pennies buy one notebook

2000 pennies buys one child's school supplies for an entire year

10,000 pennies buys maternal health-care supplies for one year

60,000 pennies pays for one teacher's annual salary

500,000 pennies supports one school for an entire year

Children in over 400 mountain villages in remote northern Pakistan and Afghanistan are on the waiting list, hoping to learn in a new school.

Join this effort to help build a bridge of peace, one penny at a time, offering alternatives to the cycle of war and terrorism.

Contact June Shultz for more information on this project.

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Book Review: *Nonfiction Reading Power*

If you are looking to find ways to help students find meaning in informational text on their way to becoming independent, strategic readers and thinkers, then consider this book written by Adrienne Gear.

The author describes five specific thinking strategies in the text. Best of all, Gear shows how to use children's books to motivate and apply

"Reading Power is not grounded in any book or tub of books. It is grounded in the principles of thinking and metacognition."

thinking skills to informational text.

"The Power to Zoom In" involves highlighting the importance features of non-fiction text. "The Power to Question/Infer" involves teaching students to construct deep thinking questions in order to infer. "The Power to Determine Importance" looks at text structure to help students move forward to insightful levels of comprehension. "The Power to Connect" helps read-

ers make connections to bring understanding to reading. "The Power to Transform" looks at synthesizing all of the previous strategies to formulate new perspectives on reading. The book is full of well-designed, scaffolded, easy to follow lessons to teach each concept. The author includes graphic organizers and student work samples to help the readers enhance their own understanding of concepts explained in the book.

This book is beneficial to both new and experienced teachers who work with students from kindergarten to 7th grades.

Interesting Websites

Technological advances have allowed us as consumers to access a wide variety of resources for teaching and learning. Check these sites for ideas:

www.readingrockets.org - This site offers effective teaching strategies, activities, lesson ideas, worksheets and assessments for reading.

www.literacy.uconn.edu—This site offers research, lesson ideas, and articles for review that relate to literacy.

www.fcrr.org— Visit this site for up-to-date research, student activities, literacy centers and a wealth of other reading related information.

www.readingonline.org—This site takes you to the International Reading Association's online publication of literacy practices and research in classrooms.

<http://prel.org>—This site offers many

downloadable resources on reading.



Changes to LLRC's Bylaws

2010 is the time for us to update our bylaws so that they are more congruent with KSRA's bylaws. LLRC members will have an opportunity to review the changes and vote on them at our spring banquet in April. The following changes have been recommended by our Bylaws committee:

1. Added to terms of office: *At the expiration of the president's year in office, the president shall become the immediate past president for a period of one year.*
2. Added to the Duties of President: *The president shall assume the responsibilities of the Chairperson of the Awards Committee to coordinate the application of awards from KSRA and IRA.*
3. Deleted from the Duties of Vice President: *The vice president shall serve as the chairperson of the Long-Range Planning Committee.*
4. Added to the Duties of Past president: *The immediate past president shall also serve as the chair of the Long-Range*

Planning Committee.

5. Change the following standing committees to ad hoc committees: *Publicity Committee; Committee on Studies and Research*
6. Change the term *Temporary Committees to Ad Hoc Committees*
7. Add: *The chair of each ad hoc committee shall appoint members to serve on the committee.*
8. Change: In case of the dissolution of this council, any assets remaining after the payment of debts will revert to the Keystone State Reading Association rather than the International Reading Association.

Check our website for the complete document.

Questions and feedback should be directed to Sue Francis:

sfrancis56@verizon.net

Keeping You Informed

PA Reading First is sponsoring two Summer Institutes that will focus on: Comprehension Best Practices for Your Classroom. Beginning March 15, this opportunity will be open to [all K to 5 teachers across our state](#). Dates and times:

June 28, 29, 30 Villanova University

August 3, 4, 5 Slippery Rock University

Speakers include: Donalyn Miller, Nancy Boyles, Nancy Hennessey, Nicki Clausen- Grace, Michelle Kelley, Adrienne Gear, Tim Rasinski, Sue Mowery

There is no cost to attend. Contact

bethpuschak@yahoo.com for additional info.

Special Announcements

The International Reading Association's annual conference will be held in Chicago this year. Entitled, "Reading in Many Languages," this event will take place April 25 to 28th.

Congratulations to Deborah Staudt, an LLRC member who teaches at the Janus School in Lancaster. Deborah had an article published in the October, 2009 edition of The Reading Teacher. Her article is titled "Intensive Word Study and Repeated Reading Improves

Skills for Two Students with Learning Disabilities."

PSSA Help Cards are available for purchase from KSRA. This tool has been developed to support teachers as they prepare students for the PSSA. Go to KSRA's website for additional information on these resources.

www.ksra.org



Newspaper in Education ~ Some Facts for You ~ by Kathy Geltz

During this year's NIE contest, 2,566 Design an Ad entries and 2,841 Journalism entries were received, totaling 5,407 entries. This reflects a 10 % increase in participation from last year. These entries were received from 14 different public school districts in Lancaster and one public school outside of Lancaster. There was a total of 56 public schools participating. Fourteen private and faith-based schools

participated. In addition, five home-school entries were received. In total, 227 teachers participated in the Journalism and Design an Ad contests.

LLRC members and guests met in early January to read all of the journalism entries. Design an Ad sponsors selected those winners.

A winner's reception took place on January 30th at the Lancaster Newspaper Office. The winners were photographed, winning entries were displayed, light refreshments were served and winners had an opportunity to tour the Lancaster Newspaper's Operations.

Thanks to all who made this project a success!



Serving schools in Lancaster and Lebanon Counties.

LLRC

For information about LLRC call
Beth: 717- 413 -7909

We're on the Web!
www.llrconline.org

The **Lancaster-Lebanon Reading Council** is a local affiliate of the **Keystone State Reading Association** and the **International Reading Association**. LLRC works to support professional development, advocacy, partnerships, and research in the field of literacy.

The mission of the **Lancaster Lebanon Reading Council** is to advocate literacy issues through enhancing communication and providing high-caliber professional development to literacy stakeholders in the schools within our geographical area.

Prior Knowledge vs. Text



Educators understand the important role that prior knowledge plays in creating conditions for comprehension of text. Prior knowledge is necessary for comprehension to occur. If prior knowledge is not present, teachers need to build background before expecting understanding.

Prior knowledge is made up of world knowledge, personal belief systems, and knowledge of text structure. We “get” the world knowledge idea but the belief system idea might be new to some of us. Our beliefs do define our perception of things. Knowledge of text structure also helps readers to make sense of what they are reading. Text structure knowledge requires readers to execute different skills to navigate different types of text.

Readers activate schemas, or mental webs of connected facts and ideas that pertain to a specific topic, before during, and after reading. Our schemas might be sparsely or richly elaborated. Our schemas might be true, partially true, or false. As we experience more and more things, our schemas change.

When a reader is already well informed about the topic of a text, deep comprehen-

sion of that text is more likely.

It takes some time for students to transfer new learning to an independent stage. Application of skills and strategies to independent reading takes practice. Some students have the knowledge of how to read but do not use that background knowledge to make sense of text.

E.D. Hirsch (2006) vigorously advocates the importance of expanding students’ background knowledge and vocabulary because comprehension depends very heavily on both.

The ultimate goal of reading is understanding of text. Reaching that goal requires hard work. Background knowledge is acquired by instruction, reading, media, direct and indirect experiences. Teachers play a pivotal role in scaffolding understanding by attending to background knowledge.

Assessing and filling in the gaps will build a strong bridge to help students make sense of text. As you prepare your next text for instruction, remember that we cannot guide students through territory that is unfamiliar to them. Build background!