



# Literacy Links

March, 2006  
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Monthly E-Newsletter of Maine Reading First



## Spotlight on...

### *Interactive Read Aloud*

Read alouds are one of the most valuable and powerful components of a comprehensive literacy framework. Reading aloud to students is an experience to be treasured and not to be missed if time runs short.

Transforming a read aloud into an interactive read aloud by engaging the students further promotes students' comprehension and experience with the read aloud. A read aloud becomes interactive when the teacher:

- becomes animated and expressive,
- invites student participation, and
- engages students in conversations about the book.

There are multiple benefits of interactive read alouds. They:

- promote enthusiasm and enjoyment of literature and reading,
- expose students to books they would be unable to read independently,
- build students' oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension,
- expose students to a variety of genres, authors, illustrators, themes, writing styles, text structure, and literary language, and
- provide students with a model of fluent reading.

A successful interactive read aloud takes time and planning. The following is a list of hints for success:

- Carefully select the text and establish a clear purpose.
- Preview and practice the text before reading it to students.
- Be enthusiastic while reading.
- Make connections between the text and students' independent reading and writing.
- Make the text available for students after the interactive read aloud.

*"To read efficiently, students must apply letter-sound correspondences, blend sounds together to read words, and recognize that some words are irregular. In addition, they must learn that when they do not understand something they are reading, they can use comprehension and vocabulary strategies to construct meaning from the text. That is a big undertaking for both students and teachers."*

Sharon Vaughn and Sylvia Linan-Thompson, Research-Based Methods of Reading Instruction: Grades K-3, 2004

## Description of Instructional Idea...

### *Getting the Gist*

Getting the gist is a comprehension activity which teaches students how to identify the main idea (or gist) while reading a text. The 'gist' or main idea involves combining the following information into a brief, yet complete, sentence:

- who or what the text is mostly about
- the most important information about the who or what

This lesson should begin with teacher explanation and modeling. When introducing the 'getting the gist' strategy, teachers should use a short piece of text and focus on one paragraph (or section) at a time. After explaining the strategy and reading the portion of text aloud, the teacher asks the students



## Upcoming Events

March 6~  
Maine Reading First  
Informational  
Session on DIBELS,  
Portland

March 7~  
Maine Reading First  
Informational  
Session on DIBELS,  
Bangor

March 10~  
Maine Reading First  
Sub-Grant  
Applications Due



to identify the subject of the text. This information is then recorded on an overhead transparency or chart. Next, the teacher asks the students to identify the most important information about the subject. This information is also recorded on the transparency or chart for students to see. The teacher then models how to combine both of these pieces of information into a brief statement of the main idea.

The explanation and modeling section of this lesson should be followed by opportunities for guided practice where students practice identifying the main idea with teacher support and feedback. Finally, students should have the chance to independently apply the process of 'getting the gist' while reading.

## Summary of Professional Literacy Text...

Research-Based Methods of Reading Instruction: Grades K-

3

Two reading experts, Sharon Vaughn and Sylvia Linan-Thompson, co-authored this practical resource book for teachers. Each of the five essential elements of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) is covered in-depth within separate chapters of this book. Each chapter on the essential elements includes a definition and description of the research behind it. The majority of each chapter includes many easy-to-implement instructional activities focusing on the essential element. The activity descriptions are clearly explained with objectives, materials, and sequence for implementation. Each chapter ends with an annotated bibliography and list of related websites.

Research-Based Methods of Reading Instruction: Grades K-3 was published in 2004 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and the ISBN is 0871209462.

## Children's Literature Title...

Thanks to the Animals

written by Allen Sockabasin and illustrated by Rebekah Raye

A Passamaquoddy storyteller from Maine, Alan Sockabasin, writes a touching story of how animals come to the rescue of a young boy who is accidentally abandoned in the woods. On the winter migration from the coast to the woods, baby Zoo Sap falls off his family's bobsled. The forest animals come together to protect and keep Zoo Sap safe until his father returns for him. The verso page of this book includes details about the Passamaquoddy language including the Passamaquoddy names of the forest animals who helped Zoo Sap. Thanks to the Animals was published in 2005 by Tilbury House Publishers and the ISBN is 0884482707.

## News from Maine Reading First...

There are still openings...

for the two informational sessions on the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment tool which Maine Reading First will host next week. On March 6, a session will be held at Keeley the Katerer in Portland from 9-12 p.m. and a session will be held at the Spectacular Events Center in Bangor on March 7, also from 9-12 p.m. More information and the registration form for these sessions are attached to this edition of *Literacy Links*.

*"The books that help you the most are those which make you think the most."*

Theodore Parker



*"A book is like a garden carried in the pocket."*

Chinese Proverb



## Save the date...

The Maine Reading First Summer Institute is scheduled for June 26 and 27 at the Augusta Civic Center. Stay tuned to upcoming editions of *Literacy Links* for more details about this event.

## Check it out...

The Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is "Building Capacity Through Education". This organization aims to bridge the gap between research and practice. Numerous publications are available for download on the PREL website. PREL has developed a "Research-Based Practices in Early Reading Series" which includes the following documents:

- A Focus on Fluency
- A Focus on Vocabulary
- A Focus on Comprehension
- A Focus on Professional Development
- Assessing Reading Fluency

PREL has recently created the "Early Literacy and Assessment for Learning (K-3) Series" which includes the following publications:

- Assessment *for* Learning: A Teacher's Story
- Letter Knowledge: A Teacher's Story
- Print Literacy: A Teacher's Story
- Word Identification: A Teacher's Story
- Exploring Comprehension through Retelling: A Teacher's Story

This is a very limited list of the publications available through PREL. To access their complete list of products, visit the main website

<http://www.prel.org/index.asp> and then click products, topic, and reading/language.

## Newsletter Archives

There are several earlier editions of *Literacy Links* available at

<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

Edition	Spotlight Topic
March, 2005	Maine Reading First
April, 2005	Maine Reading First Course
May, 2005	Reading Fluency
June, 2005	Vocabulary
September, 2005	Phonemic Awareness
October, 2005	Phonics
November, 2005	Comprehension
December, 2005/January, 2006	DIBELS
February, 2006	Literacy Centers

For additional information about any of the items in this newsletter or to sign up to receive this e-newsletter, please email [janet.trembly@maine.gov](mailto:janet.trembly@maine.gov)

Click here to view the Maine Reading First website  
<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

