

Literacy Links

May, 2006
Volume 2, Number 8

Monthly E-Newsletter of Maine Reading First



Spotlight on... Word Walls

Gay Su Pinnell and Irene Fountas define a word wall as a “dynamic teaching tool that is devoted to the display and study of words.” Word walls support student’s ongoing study of how words work and are designed to be interactive, not simply a display of words. Word walls encourage students to actively learn about words and therefore should be referenced and used often during reading and writing. There are many purposes and designs of word walls depending on the grade level, teacher’s purpose, or student’s interest. (See “Types of Word Walls” below.) The word wall within a classroom is built over time and may change throughout the year according to the teacher’s goals. As the year progresses, words that have been mastered by the students are removed from the wall and new words are added. In Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom (Heinemann, 1998), Pinnell and Fountas share the following considerations for making word walls effective:

1. When a new word is added to the word wall, students should be encouraged to share what they notice about the features of the word including how the word looks, sounds, what it means, and how it is connected to other words. Students can explore the new word using magnetic letters, white boards, letter cards, or other manipulatives.
2. Continue to reference the word wall and prompt students to use the displayed words while reading and writing. If students find it challenging to see the words on the wall from a distance, consider attaching library pockets and inserting multiple copies of the word cards for students to remove, use, and then return. Another option is to create individual copies of the word wall for students. The exemplars on the word wall should help students think about how to use words they know to solve unknown words.
3. Word walls should be visible in a designated section of the classroom. The words should be written on word cards and organized on the word wall in a simple, uncluttered, and cohesive manner.

Upcoming Events

June 26 and 27 ~
Maine Reading First
Summer Institute,
“Scaffolding
Proficient Readers:
The Building Blocks
and Beyond”,
Augusta Civic Center

August 8 and 9 ~
Seamless Transitions
K-12 Literacy
Conference, “A Focus
on Comprehension
and Composition”,
The University of
Maine, Orono

Description of Instructional Idea...

Types of Word Walls

There are many different types of word walls. Some possible options are listed in the chart below:

Name	Word Wall
	A word wall can be created with the first and/or last names of the students.

September 16~
 Reading Rumpus, a family day with several Maine authors and illustrators including Kevin Hawkes, John and Ann Hassett, Anne Sibley O'Brien, Ethel Pockocki, Noah Z. Jones, Lesis Sochor, Cynthia Lord, and Lynn Plourde, Gardiner, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

September 28-29~
 New England Reading Association (NERA) Annual Conference, Lowell, MA (More information about this conference will be forthcoming on the website (www.nereading.org))



Theme Word Wall	A word wall can be created with vocabulary words related to a theme of study in the classroom (ocean, animals, plants, etc.).
Compound Word Wall	A word wall can be created with a collection of compound words, such as rainbow, mailman, or watermelon.
High-Frequency Word Wall	A word wall can be created with high-frequency words which are appropriate for the grade level.
Vowel Word Wall	A word wall can be created with words which represent the sounds (short and/or long) for each vowel. (For example, a focus on short vowel sounds could include lick and sip for the short /i/ sound and pen and elephant for the short /e/ sound.)
Spelling Pattern Word Wall	A word wall can be created with words which represent various spelling patterns appropriate for the grade level. (For example, a focus on the /st/ consonant cluster could include <i>stop</i> and <i>nest</i> .)
Contraction Word Wall	A word wall can be created with contractions, such as can't, won't, didn't, etc.
Prefix and Suffix Word Wall	A word wall can be created with words which contain specific prefixes and/or suffixes. (For example, a focus on suffixes might include <i>working</i> and <i>quickly</i> whereas a focus on prefixes might include <i>undone</i> and <i>preview</i> .)

Summary of Professional Literacy Text...

Fluency Instruction:

Research-Based Best Practices

Timothy Rasinski, one of the leading experts on reading fluency, continues his contribution to the publications on this element of reading with a new compilation of readings he edited with his colleagues Camille Blachowicz and Kristin Lems. The first section includes chapters on the research and theory behind fluency written by some of the leading experts in the field of literacy including S. Jay Samuels, Timothy Shanahan, and David Chard. The second section includes descriptions of effective instructional practices from practitioners in the field and the final section explores special issues related to reading fluency including Fast Start, a parent involvement program, and focusing on fluency with struggling readers.

Fluency Instruction: Research-Based Best Practices, edited by Timothy Rasinski, Camille Blachowicz, and Kristin Lems was published in 2006 by The Guilford Press and the ISBN is 1593852533.

Children's Literature Title...

The Great Fuzz Frenzy

Written and illustrated by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel

Janet Stevens (author of the Caldecott Honor Book Tops and Bottoms) collaborates with her sister, Susan Stevens Crummel, to create an entertaining book about what happens when Violet, a dog, drops a fuzzy tennis ball down a prairie dog hole. Readers will be captivated by the brilliant illustrations (done on some vertical and pull-out pages) and engaging text describing the prairie dog's exploration of this new object with fuzz. "They twisted it. Braided it.

"Until recently, reading fluency had not been a priority in American reading instruction."

Timothy Rasinski, Camille Blachowicz, Fluency Instruction: Research-Based Best Practices, 2006



"Books are the quietest and most constant of friends: they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers."

Charles W. Eliot

Danced, and paraded it. It was a fuzz frenzy. A fuzz fiesta. A fuzz fandangle. The whole prairie was abuzz about fuzz." This book makes a perfect selection for an interactive read aloud where teachers can model fluent reading through the conversations among the prairie dogs and discover new and playful vocabulary words like *fiasco* and *fuzzled out*.

The Great Fuzz Frenzy was published in 2005 by Harcourt, Inc. and the ISBN is 0152046267.

News from Maine Reading First...

Maine Reading First Summer Institute...

The 3rd Annual Maine Reading First Summer Institute will be held for 2 days in late June at the Augusta Civic Center. The institute, "Scaffolding Proficient Readers: The Building Blocks and Beyond", will run from 9:00-3:30 p.m. on June 26 and from 8:30-3:00 p.m. on June 27. This year's institute will feature national presenters including Dr. Joe Torgesen, the Director of the Florida Center for Reading Research, Jo Robinson, Marcia Davidson, and Janet Spector. Break-out sessions for classroom teachers, special educators, literacy coaches, and administrators will focus on some of the following topics: essential elements of reading, literacy coaching, maximizing instructional time, literacy centers, intervention strategies, and nonfiction. More details and registration information about the 3rd Annual Maine Reading Summer Institute are attached to this edition of *Literacy Links* and can also be downloaded from

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

Check it out...

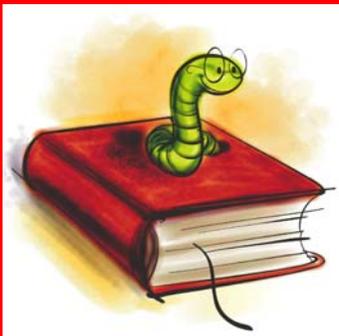
- The votes for this year's Maine Student Book Award have been counted and the winner in a close contest was The End of the Beginning: Being the Adventures of a Small Snail (and an Even Smaller Ant) by award-winning author Avi. From a list of 42 titles, Maine 4th-8th grade students cast 4100 votes for their favorite book. Also among the top five favorites were Heartbeat by Sharon Creech, Peter and the Starcatchers by Dave Barry and Ridely Pearson, Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliet, and The Supernaturalist by Eoin Colfer. The Maine Student Book Award is a joint project of the Maine Association of School Libraries, the Maine Library Association, and the Maine Reading Association.
- Big Ideas in Beginning Reading is a website developed by the Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement (IDEA). This website provides information and resources for teachers, parents, and administrators focusing on the five essential elements of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics (alphabetic principle), fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition to offering research and theories for each essential element, ideas for instruction and assessment are covered. This site also offers curriculum maps for each element of reading specific to each grade level. These curriculum maps outline instructional priorities and the recommended time of year when these priorities should be a focus of instruction. The website for Big Ideas in Beginning Reading is <http://reading.uoregon.edu>

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
March, 2006	Interactive Read Aloud
April, 2006	Nonfiction



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

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