

South Suburban Reading Council

Volume 2, Issue 4

February 2010

- Illinois Reading Council
- International Reading Association

A Message from the President.....

Dear Members,

Happy ISAT/PSAE PREP month! Hopefully some reading instruction will be allowed to be taking place in your classroom until test time. If not, my thoughts are with you. I look forward to the time that administrators realize that ISAT/PSAE prep happens all year round. That your scores will not be raised only because students are furiously filling in all the bubbles on the Coach books or writing one extended response after another. In my dreams!

Speaking of reading instruction, Jill Liapis, President-Elect and I are on a reading instruction mission. In our positions at South Cook Intermediate Service Center, we get many opportunities to go into classrooms and observe reading. I would like to say we observe reading "instruction" but in many cases we simply observe reading review, reading mentioning and reading practice using every single workbook page in the series, not to mention all the worksheets a teacher can find. If you are seeing a little bit of yourself in these scenarios than you may want to read my article on Gradual Release of Responsibility. We have found that many teachers really don't know how to teach reading and they need more professional development on how to teach rather than an assortment of strategies.

Hopefully many of you will have

opportunities to attend the Illinois Reading Council from March 18-20. IRC was very surprised that attendance numbers so far have far exceeded last year's. If you haven't yet registered, it's not too late. If you are attending the conference on Saturday, IRC wanted us to let you know that buses will not be running during the day, but parking should be abundant.

At the last IRC board meeting we had a little professional development on Wikipages. I am hooked! I immediately came home and created a page for myself and will be meeting with our board to see if we want to establish one for our Council. I had no idea how easy it was to set up. I'm sure all our young members are now rolling their eyes!

In this newsletter, look for Jill's article about the excellent meeting we had featuring Linda Wedwick and Jessica Wutz from Illinois State University talking about the self-selection of books. Unfortunately not many people had an opportunity to attend, so look for more information about them coming to your area for a full day in the Summer. You will also find information about our upcoming make and take Foldables meeting which we hope you can attend.

Stay Warm,

Dr. Kathleen Doyle

Hold These Dates

- March 22-Foldables at Balagio
- March 18-20-IRC Conference in Springfield
- April 25-28-IRA Annual Convention in Chicago
- April 29-An Evening with Author Jerry Pallotta at Dinolfos

ATTENTION: IRC Conference Presenters

If you are like any presenter, you often wonder if anyone will be attending your session. Well, we at SSRC would like to support you. If you will email us the information about yours or anyone from your district's presentation, we will send it out to our members so we can support you in the audience. Who knows, you may be the next "SSRC Presenter"! Being an SSRC presenter means being paid for all your hard work.

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Next Board Meeting:
March 30, 2010
4:30 p.m.

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Going Green by Kathleen Doyle

Starting in the Fall of 2010, SSRC is going green! Since almost everyone has access to the Internet, the newsletter will be sent via email or it can be accessed on the IRC website at <http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/localcouncils/southsuburban.html>. Not only is this an eco-friendly concept, but it will save our council hundreds of dollars in printing and

mailing costs. If you do not have Internet access, please indicate on your next dinner meeting reservation that you still need to receive your newsletters via mail. If you have not been receiving emails from SSRC, let us know by dropping us a note at southsuburban@illinoisreadingcouncil.org so that we have your most current email address.



Explicit Instruction: Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR)

by Kathleen Doyle

So often I hear from teachers that students just don't get the concept. "I've taught it, gone over it, reviewed it, but they still don't get it." I then ask the teachers to tell me how they have "taught" the concept and inevitably I never hear mention of some of the most important aspects of instruction. Is it because explicit instruction takes too much time or do teachers not know how to provide that type of instruction? I feel it's the latter.

Most of how teachers provide instruction is through teacher guides. In many districts these guides are not current and probably do not provide the steps teachers need to use to introduce the skills or the strategies. Explicit Instruction or The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) is a research-based instructional model developed by Pearson

and Gallagher (1993), but my first introduction to the concept came when I read the book, "Strategies That Work by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (2000). Although Harvey and Goudvis related the Gradual Release framework to the instruction of comprehension, it can be applied to all subject areas. The GRR framework contains the following scaffolded steps: teacher modeling, guided practice, independent practice and application to real world reading.

Modeling is more than reading directions and assigning worksheets. It involves giving the students a window into the mind of a proficient reader. During modeling the teacher explains the strategy, demonstrates how to apply the strategy successfully and thinks aloud to model the mental

processes she uses when she reads. Modeling is often done during whole group instruction to introduce all students to the grade level skill or strategy.

After explicitly modeling, the teacher gradually gives the student more responsibility for task completion. During this time, the teacher and students practice the strategy together. The teacher scaffolds the students' attempts and supports student thinking, giving feedback during conferring and classroom discussions. Students then share their thinking processes with each other during a paired task and small - and large - group discussions.

Independent practice gives students an opportunity to try out their newly acquired skills in a safe and supportive environment. After working with the teacher and with other students, the

students try to apply the strategy on their own. The students receive regular feedback from the teacher and other students.

Once the students have developed independence they are ready to apply the strategies in real life settings. Students apply a clearly understood strategy to a new genre or format and demonstrate the effective use of a strategy in more difficult text.

It is important to remember that the following framework is not linear. Many times teachers will have to back track to previous steps to ensure that all students grasp the skill or strategy. According to Harvey and Goudvis, "When we take the time to show kids how, we reap big rewards." In this age of accountability, we as teachers need to find the best strategies that work for all kids.

Studies and Research

How the Brain Reads

By Bernadette Wachel



In one half second, a word triggers all of the connections needed for a reader to understand what s/he is reading (Wolf, 2007). This process can be further broken down into the following time frames. 0-100 milliseconds, the eyes see the letters, paying attention to their shape and form. 50-150 milliseconds, the eyes scan back and forth approximately

eight letters at a time noticing letter patterns that differentiate them from other letters or words. 100-200 milliseconds, the brain mentally associates the letters to their corresponding sounds. 300-500 milliseconds, the brain is busy sorting out the meaning of the word in its given context versus its many associations. During this half second, the

angular gyrus coordinates signals from the regions of the brain that are responsible for processing the visual, auditory and verbal cues, resulting in meaning. Amazing!

Wolf, Maryanne (2007). *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

Obama Seeks \$1.35 Billion for Expansion of Competitive School Grants Program

By Dominique Morgan



President Obama announced plans to request \$1.35 billion in new funding for the Education Department's "Race to the Top" competitive grant program and expand it from the state level to the school district level.

The Education Department is

using the lure of new grant money to press states to commit to a set of education changes favored by the Obama administration, such as relaxing restrictions on using student performance data to evaluate teachers and principals.

While the idea has generated bipartisan interest in dozens of states, it has also attracted resistance among some local education groups and elected officials, who say they are being asked to cede some of their autonomy. Obama said that

expanding Race to the Top to the district level would allow participation by "innovative school districts . . . whose reform efforts are being stymied by state decision-makers."

**South Suburban Reading Council Presents:
 Laura Baker Foldables
 Monday, March 22, 2010 (5:00 PM Cash Bar — 5:45 PM Dinner)**

Balagio's
 17501 Dixie Highway
 Homewood, IL 60430
 (708) 957-1650

Menu
 Family Style
 Pasta with Marinara, Italian Sausage and Peppers,
 Roasted Chicken, Roasted Potatoes, and Salad

Mail this form and
 payment to:
 Gail Prindle
 17203 Parkside Ave.
 Tinley Park, IL 60477

Reservations are due March 8, 2010 Late reservations cannot be honored.

We're considering sending our newsletter online. Would you like to receive yours via Email? Yes _____ No _____

Please PRINT clearly and make check payable to SSRC.

Name _____ Email address _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

School _____ District _____

_____ Member (\$23.00)

_____ Non-Member (\$28.00)

_____ Pre-Service Teacher (\$12.00)

___ Yes, I would like to receive 1
 CPDU for attending this event.

Building Reading Skills with Comics

By Amy Jachowicz and Carrie Oswald



Many reading strategies and skills can be taught to students of all ages through the use of comics. Similar to picture books, newspaper comics combine illustrations and text to tell a story. This high interest text not only assists in students' development of comprehension skills, it also assists in their development of visual literacy skills. McVicker (2007) states, "Visual literacy refers to a group of vision competencies a human being can develop by seeing and, at the same time, having and integrating other sensory experiences." Due to the importance of technology in education today, it is crucial to provide students with the opportunity to acquire visual literacy skills in order to prepare them for a new age of reading.

Comics are multifaceted and provide teachers with many creative ways to teach necessary reading skills such as inferencing. Teachers

can spend a very short time daily modeling how to infer the meaning and purpose of individual comics. Applying background knowledge and then combining it with text is often a difficult skill for students to acquire, so practicing daily with text that exposes students to humor made of day to day life and current events is just one out-of-the-box way a teacher can incorporate comics. Furthermore, comics can be used as another tool to practicing basic sight words, parts of speech, context clues, vocabulary and sequencing. McVicker (2007) recommends incorporating a comprehension game using comics. Teachers or even students will write three to four questions that will be answered by analyzing a comic. Depending on the needs of each classroom, some suggestions for questions would include those that build vocabulary, those that use 5 Ws & H, and those that further inferencing skills. Some

teachers may even have students pick the correct part of speech for chosen words. Finally, teachers may also want to cut up comics ahead of time in order for students to put pictures in the correct sequential order. Implementing comics into everyday reading instruction is often motivating to all types of learners as an alternative way of developing reading skills. Just like you enjoy comics on a Sunday morning with your cup of coffee, students, too, enjoy all they have to offer while developing the skills needed to be successful readers of today.

Variations:

-Incorporate an interactive white board by visiting websites such as:
www.amazing-kids.org
www.marvelkids.marvel.com

South Suburban Reading Council
Gail Prindle
17203 Parkside Ave.
Tinley Park, IL 60477

Successful January Dinner Meeting

Our January presenters provided an engaging and exciting method to help our readers self-select appropriate reading materials. Jessica Wutz and Dr. Linda Wedwick introduced our participants to BOOKMATCH as a process to understand the factors that lead to appropriately matching students to text. If you missed this workshop, I encourage you to check out their book titled, Bookmatch: How to Scaffold Student Book Selection for Independent Reading and the website; <http://www.bookmatchforreaders.com/> for a glimpse on what you missed at our January dinner meeting.



Laura Baker Foldables

Have you been looking to make your instruction more engaged and interactive? Our next dinner meeting will provide you with multiple tools to engage your students with literacy instruction. With ISAT pressure behind you join us to see how to make instruction exciting. On March 22 we will host Laura Baker, a consultant with Dina Zike's Foldables, she will be presenting a fast paced, motivational, educational session to demonstrate new and creative ways in which to supplement literacy instruction. Each teacher will leave with multiple fun and innovative manipulatives and ideas that will help them teach strategies and skills to students.