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## WHAT'S NEW!

### No More Letter of the Week?

Research suggests a better method to teach kindergarten students about letters. It's an idea called "Letter Expert." It can be found in the book entitled No More Letter of the Week by Pat Lusche. Here's how it works! Children are selected to be a "Letter Expert" for each letter of the alphabet. The letter expert reads books from his or her teacher (on his or her reading level) that contains words with the designated letter. The letter expert practices the book at home and then reads it to the class. A sentence from the book is then written on pieces of sentence strips and the class works together to put the sentence back together again. The special letter is emphasized while the student teaches everyone about his or her expert letter. The student brings in items beginning with the letter. He or she even brings in a large letter decorated with print and cut-outs from magazines beginning with the special letter. A special bulletin board or wall is set up

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## PARENT POINTERS

**What's "Just Right"?** Children feel confident and competent when they read books that are "just right." But how do you find a "just right" book? Have your child read the back and front cover, and first page of the book. If there are more than five words that he/she cannot pronounce or understand in context, the book may be too challenging. Be supportive about finding a more perfect fit. Choosing the right book will help your little reader feel successful. **Scholastic.com**

**Middle and High School Readers** -For informational text, such as articles or textbooks chapters, guide your reader to meaningful or powerful selections. Find what will get your reader hooked on the content. Then read around this 'hook' to gain more context. **Colorado Council International Reading Association**

**Build a climate of words at home.** Go places and see things with your child, then talk about what has been seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched. The basis of good writing is good talk, and younger children especially grow into stronger control of language when loving adults -- particularly parents -- share experiences and rich talk about those experiences. Be as helpful as you can in helping your student to write. Talk through their ideas with them; help them discover what they want to say. When they ask for help with spelling, punctuation, and usage, supply that help. Your most effective role is not as a critic but as a helper. Rejoice in effort, delight in ideas, and resist the temptation to be critical. **National Council of Teachers of English NCTE**



by the teacher to display each letter. This bulletin board makes for a great resource and can even be incorporated through center activities! Sound interesting? Give it a try!

### Resources

*Moving Beyond Letter of the Week* by Bobbi Fisher

*No More Letter of the Week* Pat Lusche

## **CommonCoreState Standards (CCSS)**

The district's CCSS PLC continues to meet monthly. Support for teachers in all content areas is provided in the following areas: tiered vocabulary, debunking myths about the standards, making shifts to drive literacy and math standards forward, the impact of the standards across all content areas, close reading, and insights into how students reason mathematically to name a few. The standards define knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate from high school and be able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Are evidence-based.

## **MODEL CURRICULUM (MC)**

Benchmark Assessments provided by the NJDOE are administered in all K-12 Language Arts and Math classrooms throughout the district. Results from the 6 week assessments help school data teams to determine trends, strengths and areas of challenge. The NJDOE developed the MC to assist districts with implementation of the Common Core State Standards by providing an example from which to work and/or a product for implementation.

## **DIGITAL SOLUTIONS**

Q. What's a WIKI?

A. A web site developed collaboratively by a community of users, allowing any user to add and edit

content. Teachers can share ideas and lessons on the Orange WIKI. Just follow the steps below:

- **Login in to the wiki**
- **Locate page for lesson**
- **Select edit**
- **Title the lesson on the page**
- **Upload the lesson**

## **Common Core**

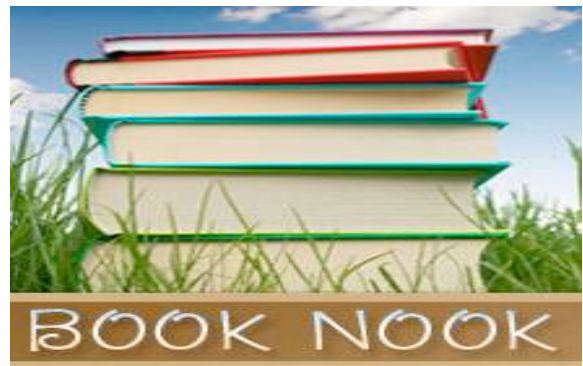
<http://www.literacyta.com/common-core-standards/writing>

Success at the Core

<http://successatthecore.com/Default.aspx>

Teacher Channel

<https://www.teachingchannel.org>



Great teachers like to go beyond the basal and explore resources that strengthen teaching practices and significantly improve student learning. Each newsletter will feature a professional text to support instructional practices.

Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement (Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis) is chock full of information for teachers of literacy. Part one goes in-depth into the foundation of meaning. Part two details strategy lessons on monitoring comprehension, activating and connecting to background knowledge, questioning, visualizing and inferring, summarizing and determining importance in nonfiction texts. Part three covers comprehension across the curriculum and part four provides a thorough list of resources that support strategy instruction such as ideas for anchor charts, book lists for teaching content in music, art and history and so much more! If you are interested in the hows and whys of teaching reading comprehension then this is the book for you!

## **WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?**

### **How Do I Use Read 180 Reports?**

1. Use the assessment, reporting, and test-taking strategies (silver book).
2. Select a report.
3. Log onto Scholastic Achievement Manager (SAM)
4. Compare student growth and areas of challenge.
5. Determine the appropriateness of the student's reading level and make necessary adjustments.
6. Inform students about their progress and provide encouragement and incentives for Improvement.

### **NEXT ISSUE:**

- Summarizing
- Argument Writing
- Close Reading

## **Teachers are talking...**

**"The department meetings help me understand/ notice...**

how to use exemplars and rubrics to guide instruction

different strategies for text analysis

students are able to pick out essential details"

**"I want a deeper understanding of.....**

how to help my students develop strong conclusions

close reading

vocabulary development"



## **CONSULTANT CORNER**

OPA English and OHS English/History teachers continue to work with **Dr. Ernest Morrell**. Plans are underway for the district's secondary English teachers to participate in a project sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the National Center for Literacy (NCLC) during the November 2013 annual NCTE convention in Boston, MA.

In addition, Dr. Morrell, NCTE president elect and director for the Institute of Urban and Minority Education (IUME) at Teachers College-Columbia University has invited secondary students to participate in the Hip-Hop Summit at Columbia University.

Ongoing professional development continues for the district Language Arts Master Teachers (LAMT). Ms. BeBe Morrissey, Literacy Consultant, meets with the LAM on a monthly basis. Target areas include: writers workshop, unpacking Model Curriculum Assessments, deepen and understand close reading in Language Arts and other content areas, increasing student discourse, strengthening writing conferences, constructing and evaluating open ended responses, to name a few.

## **NETWORKING NOTES**

The National Writing Project (NWP) focuses the knowledge, expertise, and leadership of our nation's educators on sustained efforts to improve writing and learning for all learners. Rutgers University ([nwp@rutgers.org](mailto:nwp@rutgers.org)) is affiliated with this nationwide project. 2013 Saturday Seminars are offered on Jan 12 and Feb 9. Orange Language Arts Master Teachers (MT) are attending to network with educators across the state and learn best practices on such topics as writing workshop, peer conferences and vocabulary development. Turnkey will be provided to the ELA staff at large.

## **MONTHLY DEPARTMENT MEETINGS**

Third Monday's in Orange is an exciting time! Content area teachers get a chance to meet with their peers across the district to share best practices, learn cutting edge teaching strategies and techniques and strengthen vertical and horizontal articulation. In the fall of 2012, Language Arts Master teachers led sessions on: Writers Workshop, Argument Writing and Unpacking the Model Curriculum Assessments.

***"If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow."***

*John Dewey*