Leslee Milch Named Outstanding Alumna for 2012

The Department of Reading Faculty and the Reading Educators Guild Board were delighted to present Leslee Milch (pictured above on right with Kathi Bartle Angus) with this year’s outstanding alumna award at the March breakfast meeting. Leslee Milch is a Reading Specialist who has 18 years experience teaching kindergarten, first and second grade limited English-speaking students in the Buena Park Elementary School District in Orange County, California. She has also served as the District’s Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Induction Program Coordinator.

Since certifying as a Nationally Board Certified Teacher (NBCT), Ms. Milch has served as a Candidate Support Provider and the Recruitment/Outreach Coordinator with the Orange County Department of Education National Board Certification (NBC) Support Program in Costa Mesa, California and also serves on the California State University, Fullerton NBC Advisory Board in addition to working as a Candidate Support Provider (CSP) with the Professional Teaching Development Center NBC Support Network at CSUF. As a NBCT State Farm Liaison and the Boeing Ambassador Program Coordinator with the NBPTS, Ms. Milch has served as an advocate and spokesperson at the local, state and national levels.

Currently Ms. Milch is one of eight NBCTs selected from a pool of over 500 applicants from across the country to serve on a committee with the NBPTS to revise the Early Childhood Generalist Certificate Standards. She further worked to provide the NBPTS with a matrix of the second and third generation of the Early Childhood Generalist Certificate Standards and an alignment of the standards with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Standards.

In her spare time, Leslee Milch has managed to co-author a NBCT resource book for teachers. The book will be published by Pearson this year.

Leslee Milch exemplifies the high standards and professional dedication that make the CSUF community proud.

Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center

The Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center provides a place for graduate students to work with struggling readers and for research in innovative practice. Funds from the foundation account have been used to sponsor clinic student scholarships, support the Pocket Tutor project, and provide new technology and materials.

The raffle held at the REG breakfast on March 17 raised almost $400 for the Foundation account. The big-ticket item was a Bloggie video camera donated by the Reading Department. Board member Chris Parmenter was the lucky one with the winning ticket for that item. Additional raffle item donations from the following individuals were most appreciated: Kathi Bartle Angus, Jan Bagwell, Karen Ivers, Debbie Lombardi, Gena Lovett, Kim Mundala, Maureen Provenzano, and Lesley Zorola.
**Motivation and the Community College Reader**

By Valerie Hannah

I began my college career feeling underprepared and forced to enroll in multiple basic skills courses at a community college, I can attest to the significant challenges and opportunities this growing community college population faces. This group of students not only requires supplemental academic courses to bring them up to college academic levels, but they also need assistance to develop their motivation toward reading and lifelong learning.

**Self-efficacy and Motivation in the Community College Student**

An important pillar of motivation theory is the idea of self-efficacy and its role in supporting intrinsic and long-term motivation. Self-efficacy refers to beliefs a person has about his or her capabilities to learn or perform behaviors as designated levels (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). A student’s perception of their level of self-efficacy can often be unrealistic, therefore, while they might be very capable of success they may engage in self-destructive behaviors due to their unrealistic perception of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy differs from self-esteem because self-esteem is a general feeling about one’s self, while self-efficacy pertains to a very specific belief about how one performs on a task or content area (e.g., a student can have high self-efficacy in math, but low self-efficacy in reading. While at the same time have high self-esteem in general). Research shows that self-efficacy has a direct correlation to motivation and can establish a sense of control over student academic success therefore increasing self-efficacy (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). It is important for students to feel empowered to attempt tasks and make decisions that have personal meaning and connection.

**Self-determination and Self-directed Learning**

Self-determination theory applies to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. As an additional pillar of motivation theory it provides more insight into how to develop and use intrinsic motivators to promote long term academic success. This pillar focuses on “individual’s opportunities to make choices or decisions about how to behave or think as precursors to their perceived control” (Sweet, 1997, p. 89). Sweet (1997) has identified three psychological needs that play significant roles in a person’s self-determination: relatedness, competency, and autonomy. Relatedness refers to the personal connection students develop to academic settings. While similar to self-efficacy, competency does not refer to the expectation a student has about how s/he will perform, rather, it is the emotional reaction a student has to a task or assignment. Elements such as environment and level of challenge, or Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the span between skill level and potential level, will affect a student’s level of competency (Vygotsky, 1978). Finally, autonomy is
a psychological element of self-determination theory that supports the increase in empowerment and intrinsic motivation students feel when they are able to self-select reading material and learning content. The freedom for students to experience self-determined learning is essential in developing intrinsic motivation. Together these three elements fulfill visceral needs students bring to academic settings.

What is also important to note about self-determination theory and its components is how teachers can positively affect students’ learning experiences by promoting self-reliance and enabling. In a recent report published by, The Center for Student Success (2007), three characteristics of self-directed learning were identified: learners attempt to assert control over their learning, their behavior, and their environment; learners are working toward a goal, which provides a standard by which success can be measured; and the individual student must be in control of his or her actions and decisions. These characteristics embrace a fundamental element of motivation theory and provide a framework for curriculum and educational environments to be developed.

My Project

My master’s project was to develop a two part handbook for community college faculty who teach basic skills students. The purpose of the first part of the handbook is to help community college faculty instill self-regulated behavior and develop student academic potential. The tools and supplemental curriculum developed are designed to supply faculty with practical classroom activities. Specifically, they are designed to help basic skills students develop their identity of who they are as learners, as well as activities to motivate students to further develop their academic and reading skills.

The second part of the handbook has been designed as a long term (i.e., 13-20 week) module based professional development workshop that will: (a) educate full-time and adjunct college faculty about the need for active motivational support for their basic skills students; (b) discuss best practices and how to create a classroom environment that promotes motivation and engagement; (c) provide instructional strategies and tools for instructors to use for basic skills reading courses to build lifelong literacy engagement; and (d) provide a forum for personal and departmental professional reflection of basic skills teaching pedagogy and implementation.

References


Poetry in a Two-Way Immersion Program
By Imelda Loya

Nearing the completion of my Masters Program in Reading, I decided to write a project that would directly apply to my teaching and make an impact on my students. With that in mind, and thinking about my personal interests and investment in a Two-Way Immersion school, the idea for my project was born. The purpose of Poetry in a Two-Way Immersion Program, a Handbook for Primary Teachers is to incorporate poetry into the curriculum as a means to support fluency, enrich vocabulary, and create a positive motivation for reading in two languages.

Researchers and educators have studied and written about the strong connection between poetry and fluency. Fluency plays an integral role in the successful experience of a reader. Someone who can decode and read fluently will use his energy on the comprehension aspect in order to enjoy the reading. Poetry can provide the repeated practice of language patterns and decoding skills. It also includes specialized language of a particular theme or content area. In poems, specific vocabulary words set the mood, whether it is joy, silliness, or excitement. Struggling readers may be faced with frustration when reading long texts. Poems are often short and entertaining, leading to confidence and motivation to read. Poetry is a genre that puts many students at ease, especially struggling language learners. The appearance, brevity, rhythm, and rhyme of poems keep students engaged, particularly those learning a second or even a third language. Cahnmann (2006) made a legitimate point by remarking “Poetry can be a reflective place for bilingual students and their teachers to explore their linguistic and cultural experiences.” (p. 342). It is a way to bring a sense of community and belonging to any type of classroom.

In our classroom, we are currently preparing for our Poetry Recital to take place on April 26, which is also “Keep a Poem in Your Pocket” Day. This is part of our celebration of National Poetry month. With great excitement, all the students have been practicing and rehearsing two poems each, one in English and one in Spanish. The students are enjoying their poems filled with onomatopoeia, vivid words, and fun rhymes. Poetry is positively a powerful way to meet the needs of all students as they improve their fluency, expand their vocabulary, and nurture their love for reading.

Reference

"Poetry is positively a powerful way to meet the needs of all students as they improve their fluency, expand their vocabulary, and nurture their love for reading.”
– Imelda Loya –
The purpose of this project was to give teachers an array of ideas and activities to use in helping their kindergarten and first grade children develop early literacy skills. I wanted to create a handbook that would allow teachers, who were new to first grade, begin the school year with the knowledge that they could effectively teach their children to read. The handbook was designed to be used in a balanced reading program. It was divided into five sections: Research on Early Literacy, Phonemic Awareness Activities, Phonics Activities, Sight Word Activities and Assessments. Activities were chosen that met several kindergarten and first grade state standards.

Early reading is dependent on having some understanding of the internal structure of words and explicit instruction in phonological awareness skills is effective in teaching early reading. In order to be effective in promoting reading independence, teachers must incorporate instruction in phonological awareness into meaningful classroom experience. The phonemic awareness activities included songs, chants and word sound games. Card games were developed around the selected word study for that week or month. The games were playful and engaging, interactive and social. Exemplary phonics instruction focuses on reading words, not learning rules. Competent readers recognize new words by comparing them or their spelling patterns to words they already know. The more words children read with a particular pattern (onset and rime), the more likely they are to have that pattern stored in their brain. Nearly 500 words can be derived from 37 phonograms common to primary grade texts. Children were provided several opportunities to apply what they learned about letters and sounds to the reading of stories.

Young readers also need to develop a store of sight words, words that are recognized immediately without having to resort to analysis. The irregular spellings of many English words limit the effectiveness of phonic analysis and dictate that these words be learned as sight words. It is important to provide a variety of easy readers so students can practice reading basic sight words while engaged in the act of reading.

A few things to remember: to become good at something, you need to practice, whether it’s playing sports, learning to play a musical instrument or learning to read. If you call it a game, children will want to play it, so make a game where they are learning to read and discriminate letters and sounds. Also, lots of praise pays huge dividends in children wanting to please you and therefore, learn the material, whether it be reading, math or science.
I was inspired to write my project for several reasons. First, Iranian-American students are one of the diverse populations found in the schools in this country. While many of them were born in the United States, others immigrated to the United States with their families when they were very young. I became inspired to work on writing relevant literature for Iranian-American students to give them and their classmates the opportunity to learn and understand the Iranian culture alongside mainstream culture. Also, it was my hope that my book would help Iranian-American learn to appreciate their rich native culture that has been developed over several thousand years.

The key findings in my project are outlined here:

Benefits of Multicultural Literature

- Psychological benefits
  - It exposes children to our pluralistic society.
  - It helps them develop understanding and pride in their heritage.

- Social Benefits:
  - It builds a connection between children and other culture.
  - Teaches them people from other cultures do similar things in different ways and have same basic needs, feelings and emotions.

- Educational Benefits
  - It is utilized in US classrooms to teach and learn based on democratic principals.
  - Teaches them about our diverse society.
  - Develops language and literacy by developing schema.

Investigating Negative Bias

- Children develop tolerance towards other cultures.
- They learn how to live in a pluralistic society and avoid prejudices behavior.

Selecting Quality Picture Books

- Authenticity
  - The combination of the illustration and the expressive text must contain culturally specific elements and be authentic.
  - Researches have different opinions about multicultural picture books written from an insider or outsider perspective.

Working on my project and its culmination in a well-received picture book were great life experiences for me. My next goal is to find a way to get my book published.
Establishing a High School Literacy Program
By Lisa Mo

The Carnegie Corporation of New York’s Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010) published a seminal report on the components needed at a secondary institution to enable adolescents to be prepared for colleges and careers. They targeted a list of minimum knowledge requirements that teachers need in order to instruct all their students effectively. My project is a handbook that addresses the very same issues that the report mentions, but in a very practical manner. It offers instructional strategies for all who teach reading and writing at the high school level, but it is also a resource for literacy coaches who are working with content area teachers. Taken as a whole, it provides direction for a high school literacy program.

The first part of the handbook provides steps to create a high school literacy team, which oversees the high school literacy program. The second portion of the handbook addresses teachers who work with students that are reading at least two levels below their grade. It provides diagnostic testing and instructional strategies that will target their areas of growth in reading and writing. In addition, it describes placement issues and logistics in establishing a reading intervention program. The final portion of the handbook caters to teachers of the general college preparatory student population. It offers assignments that incorporate the three phases of reading (pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading). Within this section, strategies that develop literacy skills across the content areas are also introduced.

All the strategies can be adopted for all content areas. However, are there discipline-specific strategies? Disciplinary literacy is “sophisticated and specific kinds of literacy support for reading in the content-areas or disciplines” (Lee & Spratley, 2010). During my presentation, I mentioned that since graduating from the program, I have had the opportunity to explore how to support disciplinary literacy at my school with our literacy team. This year, every content area teacher created content-specific vocabulary lists, focusing on one word per week. Our next step will be to discover strategies for reading, thinking, and writing for each specific discipline with a grass-roots approach.

Reference

During my presentation, I mentioned that since graduating from the program, I have had the opportunity to explore how to support disciplinary literacy at my school with our literacy team. – Lisa Mo
Hancock Fund

The Hancock Fund provides scholarships for Reading graduate students and supports the CSUF Reading Clinic, supplying books and technology for use by clinicians and students. REG members who would like to donate money for scholarships or REG’s other projects can do so by contributing to the Hancock Fund online at http://www.fullerton.edu/foundation/donate/index.asp or by including a Hancock Fund donation along with membership renewal.

REG would like to thank the following members for their support and generous contributions to the Hancock Fund:

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REG 2011-2012 scholarship recipients were recognized at the March meeting. They were Melissa Base (center), Heather Wilson (right), Sandra Lee and Laura Cerda (not pictured). Jill Harris (left) was the recipient of the Graham scholarship.

Attention Reading Department 2011–2012 Grads

You and your family are invited to a Reception to celebrate your graduation from the Reading Department. Please join us on the second floor patio (south side) of the EC building at the conclusion of graduation on Saturday, May 19.

Alumni who are interested in assisting with the reception should contact Lesley Zorola at lzorola@acsd.k12.ca.us.

Visit us on the web at http://reg.fullerton.edu/ to see the 2012-2014 slate of officers and on Facebook for more photos from the March 17 meeting.

Please post enclosed flyer about the CSUF Reading Masters at your school.