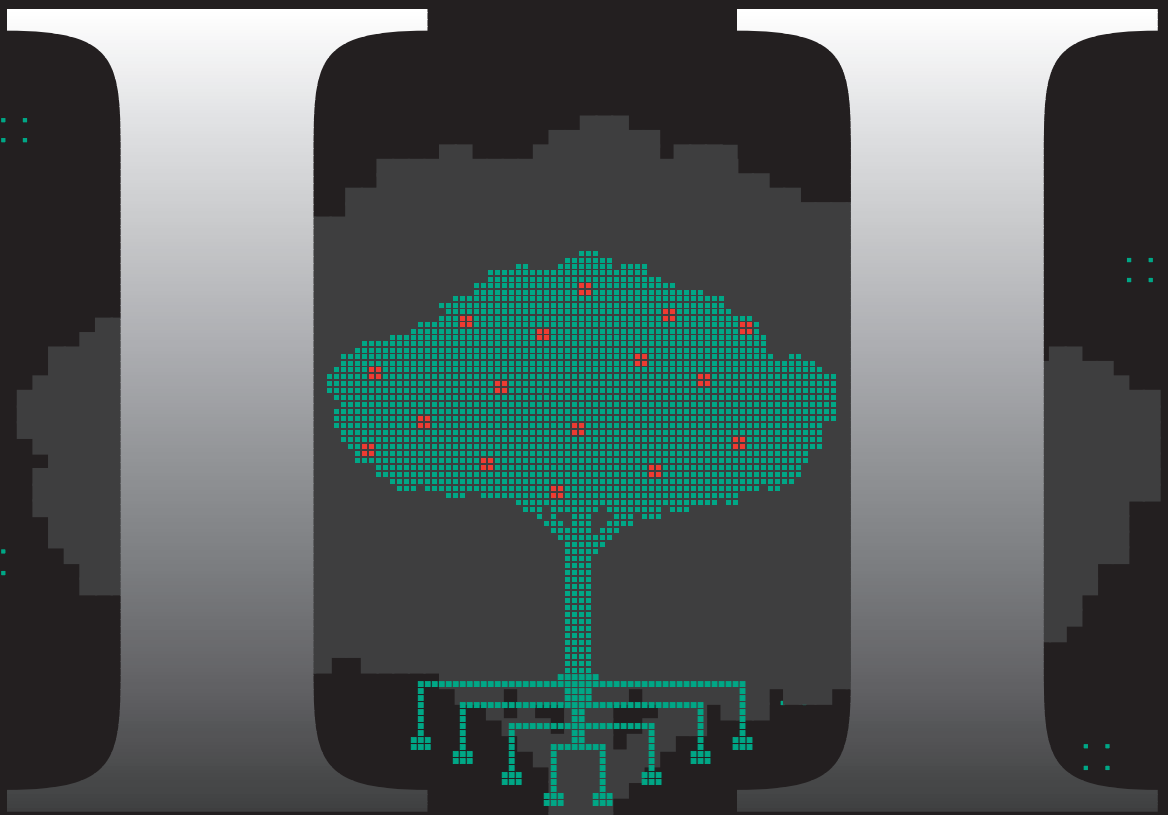


2003

The Teachers Network

IMPACT



Foundations of Excellence

A grants program supported by the
Fairfax County Public Schools Education Foundation, Inc.

2003



2003

IMPACT II – THE TEACHERS NETWORK

FOUNDATIONS OF EXCELLENCE

A Catalog of Creative Instructional Strategies



Isis M. Castro
Chairman
Fairfax County School Board

Daniel A. Domenech
Superintendent of Schools

James M. Irving
Chairman
**Fairfax County Public Schools
Education Foundation, Inc.**

Nancy F. Sprague
Chief Academic Officer

Thomas M. Brady
Chief Operations Officer

Nicholas F. Fischer
Assistant Superintendent
Instructional Services Department

Sylvia Auton
Director
Office of Staff Development and Training

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Fairfax County Public Schools Education Foundation, Inc.



2002 - 2003

FOUNDATIONS OF EXCELLENCE

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IMPACT II

I N F A I R F A X C O U N T Y

The Teachers Network-IMPACT II has received the generous support of the Fairfax County Public Schools Education Foundation, Inc. since 1984. Through this proven means of sharing imaginative ideas, more than 1,400 grants have been awarded to teachers for innovative and creative educational strategies.

Any instructional-level staff member is eligible to submit a proposal. The funds may be used to purchase supplemental materials, classroom supplies, and software to enhance teaching. Honorariums for guest speakers and funds for a field trip may also be financed with grant funds.

The three types of IMPACT II grants are awarded twice during the school year. Proposals may be submitted at any time prior to the application deadlines, which are announced in *Supergram*.

Adaptor Grants

A teacher or team of teachers who modifies an existing IMPACT II program by using a different perspective or a different setting may apply for an adaptor grant.

Disseminator Grants

A teacher or team of teachers who develops a quality program, has used it in the classroom, and knows it to be effective may apply for a disseminator grant.

Teacher-Researcher Grants

A team of teachers may apply for a teacher-researcher grant. The purpose of the teacher-researcher grant is to foster student learning by encouraging teachers to improve their professional performance and to become more reflective practitioners. The information gained by the research should potentially contribute to instruction throughout the school system.

Teachers interested in these grants should contact the Office of Staff Development and Training at 703-208-7825 for more information.

Selection Committee

A selection committee composed of elementary, middle, and high school teachers, a technology specialist, representatives from central offices, and/or former IMPACT II recipients reviews the grants.

Each committee member receives a set of grant proposals. All identifying information is removed to promote objectivity in the selection process. The committee makes recommendations to the Superintendent, who approves the final award recipients.

Awards Reception

The Superintendent and members of the School Board and the Fairfax County Public Schools Education Foundation, Inc. honor grant recipients at an awards reception each spring. The honorees receive certificates recognizing their participation in the IMPACT II program.



Top photo: Dr. Daniel Domenech, Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, addresses recipients and guests at the awards ceremony.

Bottom photo: Bush Hill Elementary third graders enjoy a ride on The Brain Train.





IMPACT II

I N F A I R F A X C O U N T Y

Networks

IMPACT II teachers become part of local and national networks of teachers who share their creative and innovative programs and strategies in a variety of ways.

The national IMPACT II office has developed the website [Teachersnetwork.org](http://www.teachersnetwork.org), at <http://www.teachnet.org>. This site was created and is maintained by teachers, for

teachers throughout the United States. Teachers Network is a non-profit education organization that identifies and connects innovative teachers exemplifying professionalism and creativity within public school systems. A professional community of teachers and educators working together to improve student achievement,

Teachers Network serves

30 national and international affiliates that have adopted one or more of our major program initiatives.

Teachers Network helps teachers make the most of innovative and creative ideas by awarding them grants to package and disseminate their ideas to other interested teachers, who then adapt and tailor them to their own

classrooms. More than 40,000 teachers have received IMPACT II grants to develop, document, and disseminate innovative preK-12 programs in the curriculum areas of science, math, technology, and literacy.

In addition, Teachers Network offers a national biannual newsletter, lesson plans and projects, online discussion forums for teachers, and a variety of professional development opportunities. They also publish a series of handbooks available for purchase at their Teacher Store.

IMPACT II sites produce annual catalogs of award-winning programs. *Foundations of Excellence*, the catalog describing the programs developed in Fairfax County, is distributed to all county schools, as well as to IMPACT II offices across the nation.

IMPACT II recipients are also offered opportunities to attend IMPACT II functions to engage in discussion groups and workshops designed for sharing positive experiences, creative ideas, and innovative programs. The most recent national project, the National Teacher Policy Institute, included 20 Fairfax County teachers who focused on teacher reform in the areas of teacher preparation, retention, and professional development or on the impact of teacher leadership on student learning.

Program Profiles

Foundations of Excellence contains the recent award-winning programs. They are arranged by academic level (preschool, elementary, middle, and high) under the type of grant. Special education programs are noted in the table of contents.

For additional information on the FCPS IMPACT II program, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OSDT/awardsgrants.htm> and click on **The Teachers Network-IMPACT II** link.



Top Photo: The Annandale High School String Quartet, directed by Francesca Fitzgerald, entertains at the reception prior to the awards ceremony.

Bottom Photo: Kings Park students explore the treasures of their past.

Biography Boxes

Peggy Howell



Biography Boxes is a hands-on program that provides dolls and puppets that represent important people in American history who are studied in the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) and the Fairfax County Program of Studies (POS). Dolls from the famous Be'an collection of historical personages are packaged with paperback biographies and other relevant artifacts or pictures. The boxes are circulated to classrooms along with ideas for sharing biographical information via role-playing or puppetry.

After a student or students have studied the historical person by reading the materials found in the box, they present the

historical character to the class by using the doll or making a similar doll or puppet. Children work in pairs or small groups in order to develop their presentations and are encouraged to use the artifacts and pictures that are included in each biography box. Suggestions for sharing biographical information are presented to the children at the beginning of the unit. Students are encouraged to research additional information in the library or on the Internet. This program can be differentiated to fit the needs of the students and is an exciting way to learn about and remember famous people.

Students

This program includes students from kindergarten to fourth grade.

Staff

The librarian and classroom teachers develop and implement this program.

Materials and Facilities

Dolls, books, and craft supplies are included in the boxes. The boxes are placed in a designated storage area when they are not in use.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are required.

Overall Value

Children are always interested in the puppets and dolls that are located in the library and some classrooms. They have been used to supplement biography instruction. This program will make the dolls available to all classrooms in a more structured way so that all students can handle and use them in their studies. The dolls are dressed appropriately and elicit discussion among the children on an informal level. This interest helps the students in their study of the people about whom the dolls are made.



More Information:

Peggy Howell, West Springfield Elementary School
6802 Deland Drive, Springfield VA 22152 – 703-914-4400 – Principal: Kathryn Woodley

A Bone-a-Fide Experience: Studying Muscles and Your Skeleton

Dorothy Krenzberger



A Bone-a-Fide Experience: Studying Muscles and Your Skeleton is a creative kinesthetic approach to learning the bones and muscles that are used in games and exercises for students. Using songs, games, chants, and literature, students acquire a better understanding of how their skeletal and muscular systems work. Students are actively involved in challenging games and interesting activities that incorporate various learning styles as well as represent several of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences. Music and literature plus physical education equal a spirited environment full of exciting learning possibilities. The variety of games and activities encourages team cooperation and fosters feelings of community across individual grade levels.

A Bone-a-Fide Experience: Studying Muscles and Your Skeleton addresses objectives for the music and physical education Programs of Studies (POS) as well as the Standards of Learning (SOL). It also offers opportunities for a variety of learning styles including aural, visual, and kinesthetic. Through chants, students learn to point to specific areas on their bodies while reciting the names of each bone and muscle. Students listen to *Dem Bones*, a story read by the librarian, then sing along with the music teacher. Students can also identify skeletal parts by sticking Velcro parts onto a fabric skeleton. As students exercise and play games, like *Doggie, Doggie, Where's your Bone* and *The Boneyard Game*, they identify the muscles used for each activity.

Assessments can be made by using dipsticks and written quizzes. Oral answers become the assessment for this part of the unit. Teacher and student demonstrations of movements are done throughout the unit to teach and reinforce skills and to ensure that each student understands what is expected. Students learn to process visual movement cues by watching others around them. Students become teachers, and the learning techniques carry over into the classroom. Students use bone-shaped candies to assemble a miniature skeleton as a final fun activity.

Students

Approximately 100 students in grades one and two participate. Students include

those who are acquiring English and those who have learning disabilities.

Staff

Two physical education teachers, one librarian, and one music teacher work collaboratively to design and develop this program.

Materials and Facilities

Materials needed are music CDs, muscle and bone posters, and *Dem Bones* candies. The program takes place in the gymnasium.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are required.

Overall Value

All students can participate 100 percent of the time, and that interaction helps direct the energy and focus of the students. Students are proud of their accomplishments. The support of the teachers and administrators lets the students know that their knowledge of muscles and bones and what they are doing is an important part of the curriculum. Photographs of the program are displayed on the bulletin board in the hallway for the entire school to view. This brings the muscles and bones unit and the students into the school spotlight and helps to positively reinforce the students' concepts.



More Information:

Dorothy Krenzberger, Haycock Elementary
6616 Haycock Rd., Falls Church, VA 22043 – 703-531-4000 – Principal: Jay McClain



The Brain Train

Laura Donaldson, Laura Flaherty, Tara Piasecki, and Tara Smith



The Brain Train is a series of language arts workshops that allow third grade students to practice a variety of skills in preparation for the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. For two weeks, the students are immersed in activities designed to improve reading and writing skills. These skills include: spelling and grammar, reading comprehension, references, revision, editing, and graphic organizers. The students become active participants within their small group settings, using cooperative learning and specially designed games to practice test-taking strategies.

The Brain Train comes to life with eight train cars (small groups) of students who

travel from station to station (workshops). Each workshop is taught by a conductor (a teacher or a staff member) who focuses on one of the language arts skills. At each workshop, students are given a packet that includes sample SOL questions, practice worksheets, and creative learning games. To kick things off, the conductors put on a pep rally for all the third graders to introduce **The Brain Train**. At the pep rally, students are introduced to the conductors and view the video *"The Little Engine That Could."* Students are then presented with brain erasers, personalized Brain Train pencils, binders, and boarding passes.

Students

Approximately 80 third grade students participate.

Staff

The third grade teachers, ESOL teachers, librarian, reading specialist, physical disabilities teacher, and instructional assistants implement the program.

Materials and Facilities

Materials include personalized pencils, brain erasers, folders, and award pins for each student. The activities take place in the classrooms and in the library.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are needed.

Overall Value

The Brain Train promotes a cohesive sense of community and responsibility within the school. Students gain confidence because they learn test-taking strategies and are given opportunities to practice them before taking their first standardized test. The students also enjoy the assortment of workshops and working with a variety of teachers and students from other classes. This program results in improved social skills and increased test scores.



More Information:

Laura Donaldson, Bush Hill Elementary School
5297 Westchester Street, Alexandria, VA 22310 – 703-924-5600 – Principal: Jack Pitzer

Feet Poets: An After-School Jump Rope Club

Aileen Flaherty and Katherine Wit



Feet Poets is an after-school jump rope club that encourages students to write metered poetry in the form of jump rope rhymes and to create jump rope routines that incorporate learned jump rope techniques. This club integrates language arts and physical education.

The after-school club meets one time each week for one and one-half hours. Each club meeting focuses on both the language arts and physical education aspects of the program. Students are given time to write, share, revise, and perform poetry.

Students are also taught a variety of jump rope techniques using a single rope, a single rope with turners, and two ropes with turners. After learning basic jump rope tricks, students create routines that incorporate their poetry and their jump rope skills. Students perform their routines for each other and at a schoolwide event.

Students

This program was developed for third through sixth grade students.

Staff

Two classroom teachers develop and implement this program.

Materials and Facilities

The materials needed for this after-school activity are jump ropes of varying lengths, jump rope instructional books and videos, rhyming dictionaries, and jump rope rhymes. This program is best implemented in a large open space such as the gym or the playground.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are required for this program.

Overall Value

Feet Poets is an exciting after-school club that provides an extension of the school day. The club gives students the opportunity to perform activities that they create as part of their participation in the club. In this integrated program, students explore elements of poetry including rhyme, rhythm, repetition, word choice, and onomatopoeia. The work in language arts supports all students in reading and writing, while jump rope focuses on the importance of staying physically active.



More Information:

Aileen Flaherty, Woodburn Elementary School
3401 Hemlock Drive, Falls Church, VA 22042 – 703-641-8200 – Principal: Molly Bensinger-Lacy

Hold It! I Think You're Going to Like This Picture

Jane Frydenlund



Hold It! provides visual documentation of student learning that students can share with their peers and families. The program provides an opportunity for children to write about classroom photographs in a monthly student-produced newspaper, create e-mail for their families including digital photographs, and talk about their classroom experiences. Every parent asks his or her child, "What did you do in school today?" Now, instead of hearing the usual response of "not much" or "nothing," parents can read student e-mail

messages, see the digital photographs, and encourage extended conversation about their student's school experiences.

In an early childhood classroom, the process of learning is as important as the product. A visual documentation of the process enables the teacher to make informed instructional decisions for future learning. It allows teachers to visually share students' progress with both the students and their parents while also setting appropriate goals for future progress.

Students

Forty-four kindergartners and first graders participate in this program.

Staff

Two general education teachers with the help of two instructional assistants implement this program.

Materials and Facilities

A digital camera, a battery pack, and a memory card are needed.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are needed.

Overall Value

Young students who are just learning to read and write have a visual representation of their accomplishments as a springboard to oral language communication with classmates, teachers, and their parents. Parents often print the pictures out at home and give them to their children, who share the pictures with other family members, thus bringing the classroom learning and the student's accomplishments into the home.



More Information:

Jane Frydenlund, Kings Park Elementary School
5400 Harrow Way, Springfield, VA 22151 – 703-426-7000 – Principal: Mary Agnes Garman

Kings Park Attic

Sonya Bannon and Brooks Widmaier



Look in anyone’s attic and you will find treasures that have connections to life events, items we don’t want to throw away because they are linked to memories. **Kings Park Attic** is a collection of hands-on materials that enable students to create meaningful connections in the topics they are studying. These collections are available for check out by staff members to enhance units of study. The interactive resources are organized by curriculum themes and placed in centrally located storage bins. Ancient Egypt, Ancient China, Native Americans, Virginia and United States government, plants, life cycles, and butterflies are the themes for the bins this year. Different themes will be chosen each year, and additional items will be added to existing bins.

The goal of this program is to provide hands-on resources that enhance daily instruction. Both teachers and students use the items. For instance, a small replica of the Washington Monument is used to teach children how to recognize the monument. A piece of papyrus with hieroglyphics enhances the lesson when a teacher introduces the ancient Egyptian form of writing. Teachers read the book *How Seeds Grow*, and accompanying soft sculptures are used to demonstrate the process.

Students

All 750+ students in the school of pre-school-third grade benefit from the program.

Staff

All classroom teachers, including special education, can check out the bins and benefit from this program.

Materials and Facilities

Large plastic bins and appropriate instructional materials are needed for this project. When not in use, the bins are housed in a school storage room.

Outside Resources

Parents and other community members are encouraged to donate travel collections and family memorabilia to be included in the bins.

Overall Value

Young students construct their understandings in a variety of ways. When children can actually touch the item they are learning about, that experience is more powerful and lasting than one in which they only read about the topic. By having easily accessible primary resources for their units, teachers are able to bring the curriculum alive for their students. The look in the eye of a child who is able to put on a lion dance mask and participate in an actual lion dance is unforgettable. The "aha" moment when a child actually holds a replica of the Great Pyramids, instead of observing a one-dimensional picture, is priceless. This is the idea behind the **Kings Park Attic**.



More Information:

Sonya Bannon, Kings Park Elementary School
5400 Harrow Way, Springfield, VA 22151 – 703-426-7000 – Principal: Mary Agnes Garman

No Non-SENSE

Mary Courtney, Carol Ickes, and Rita Perre-Davis



No Non-SENSE is a multisensory project that integrates concepts of touch, taste, smell, sound, and sight with literature and hands-on activities. First grade students learn with and from sixth grade students as they discuss and read about senses and together create multimedia projects that use the different sensory modes. Sixth grade students also design and help younger students in activities that focus on the senses. A gallery for students displays their projects and their scrapbook.

Not only is **No Non-SENSE** important because it links science Standards of

Learning (SOL) with other areas of the curriculum, the project is also significant because it involves collaboration between two grade levels. As sixth graders plan and work with first graders, they benefit academically and socially. Younger students benefit from having older mentors and from having opportunities for hands-on learning. **No Non-SENSE** links math, science, and language arts and fosters relationships across grade levels.

Students

First and sixth grade students work collaboratively on this project.

Staff

A team of first grade and sixth grade teachers implement the project together.

Materials and Facilities

Books and hands-on materials for each sense are necessary for each first grade classroom.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are needed.

Overall Value

This program is successful because it links language arts, science, and art. Students see the connections between content areas. In addition, **No Non-SENSE** relies on collaboration between different grade levels. Studies have shown that when older students mentor and teach younger students, everyone benefits and learns. The finale for this program is the creation of an art gallery that is on display for students and families.



More Information:

Rita Perre-Davis, Freedom Hill Elementary School
1945 Lord Fairfax Road, Vienna VA 22182 – 703-506-7800 – Principal: Anita Lynch

Possibilities in Art

Jean Stark



Possibilities in Art uses originally created adaptive devices for identified needs of students with severe physical challenges to help them in art. Students using devices to meet their specific needs discover they can create original marks on paper with little involvement from others. This discovery of the original mark is one of the most creative and self-affirming developmental stages in a child's life.

With a combination of homemade adaptive materials, premade adaptive devices, classroom technology, and strong teamwork, the art experience for students and teachers can be a rewarding process.

There is a need for information and understanding among art teachers about how to approach art with severely physically challenged students. The hopeful outcome of this program is to help art

teachers to better implement successful and appropriate art experiences for children with severe physical challenges.

Students

This program works directly with eight moderately to severely physically challenged students.

Staff

The art teacher develops the program with assistance from the occupational therapist, a physical therapist, an inclusion specialist, a special education classroom teacher, and aides.

Materials and Facilities

The space required is the art room. The program is based on and built around the special needs of individual students.

Outside Resources

Many community members are willing to donate money and materials and contribute time toward the building of devices to be durable and functional for these special children. After success in the art room and a greater appreciation for color, shapes, and the arrangement of art elements, students are better able to appreciate their trips to museums.

Overall Value

Students with severe physical challenges tire quickly with the requirements of hands-on art. It is physically demanding and draining for many children even to hold onto a crayon and make a mark with it. Being able to mark with a crayon can be a tremendous challenge and accomplishment for a student. Teachers have observed that art tasks can be stressful, causing fatigue and frustration instead of joy and pleasure. Adaptive devices specifically designed for individual needs enable students to experience art as effortless, productive, and original. Teachers observe a marked positive difference in how students experience art using these devices. They feel students look forward to creating original work. The increased sense of self-esteem and sense of fun is evident in their smiles and laughter during art.



More Information:

Jean Stark, Fairhill Elementary School
3001 Chichester Lane, Fairfax, VA 22031 – 703-208-8100 – Principal: Patricia Phillips



Power Pals

Erin Blake and Megan Law



Power Pals is an after-school reading and mentoring club that pairs fifth and sixth grade students as reading mentors and buddies to second graders. The primary goal of the after-school club is to increase the reading skills and abilities of the second grade students through the use of the mentoring relationship with fifth or sixth grade student buddies, who act as reading teachers. The older students benefit from discovering the specific skills that good readers use and from helping share their love of reading with younger students. The second graders benefit from receiving one-on-one reading instruction from fifth or sixth graders, who are directed and supported by a team of teachers.

Power Pals teachers first provide training and support to the fifth and sixth grade students. The teachers conduct several sessions on how to be an effective reading buddy and teacher, focusing instruction on reading strategies that are used before, during, and after reading. Once the fifth and sixth graders complete their training, the second graders join the club. Each second grade student is then paired with a fifth or a sixth grade reading buddy.

Students

This program involves 18 students (nine second graders and nine fifth and sixth graders) in an after-school setting.

Staff

Three teachers planned and implemented this program.

Materials and Facilities

Some of the instructional materials that are used in the **Power Pals** program are a variety of multilevel reading books, chart paper, journals, sticky notes, nonfiction cubes and fiction beach balls, reading pointers, and folders for file folder games.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are needed.

Overall Value

The overall value of the **Power Pals** after-school club has been positive. The teachers have seen an increase in the reading skills and abilities of the second graders as well as an increase in their self-esteem as readers. Also, the fifth and sixth grade students have strengthened their reading skills in the process of becoming more aware of reading strategies that good readers use and through the process of teaching reading to their buddies.



More Information:

Megan Law, Woodburn Elementary School
3401 Hemlock Road, Falls Church, VA 22042 – 703-641-8200 – Principal: Molly Bensinger-Lacy

Science Giants

Nancy Spaulding



Science Giants is a science experience program developed to encourage and extend science exploration at home with parental guidance. Each student takes home science idea books that help to expand their understanding of many scientific concepts. Parents then become science guides for their children at home by choosing an experiment that can be presented in class. Students share their experiences with the class by setting up one of their favorite experiments, with guidance and help from their parent(s). These science ideas are shared for 45 minutes a week. Each experiment is then placed in the science lab in the classroom for other students to try over and over again.

To inspire the students and get them excited about scientific ideas, a local company

called Mad Science presents science experiments. Also, once a month, professional scientists come to the class as **Science Giants**. These community members help to expose students to scientific inquiry through awareness, exploration, observation, and use.

At the end of the year the two classes hold a **Science Giants** think tank. During the think tank, the students present their favorite science ideas to other classes in the form of miniature science projects. A guest participant presents awards for scientific participation to each student.

Students

Forty-four students in a K-1 multiage class participate in this program.

Staff

Two full-time classroom teachers and an instructional assistant develop and implement the program.

Materials and Facilities

Materials needed are two science experiment books for students to carry home in a science bag including additional supplemental information. Other items needed are science materials for the visiting scientist to use and items to place in the classroom science lab.

Outside Resources

Mad Science Inc., a professional science program, visits the classes. Parents and scientists from the community come to guide and make presentations. A university professional is available to view science research ideas.

Overall Value

The students have a greater interest in and are now enthusiastic about science. They are able to learn more about many scientific concepts not usually taught at this age. Because the students are able to take their time at home to explore, they can try several experiments and involve their parents. This helps the students to broaden their science experiences and expand their science language.



More Information:

Nancy Spaulding, Kings Park Elementary School
5400 Harrow Way, Springfield, VA 22151 – 703-426-7000 – Principal: Mary Agnes Garman

Transcending Time and Reality

Sue Bark and Precious Werner



Transcending Time and Reality is a cross-age, cross-curricular collaboration effort that integrates photography and art processes with social studies, math, and language arts in order to create fine arts images that are exhibited at a local community business.

The project begins with the elementary art teacher instructing fourth graders about Colonial architectural elements and one-point perspective in their art class. Using this information, the students create realistic one-point perspective watercolor and ink drawings of Colonial buildings and cityscapes. Then, high school photography students scan the drawings into the computer and alter them to gray scale using graphic software.

The joint venture begins when the high school photography students visit the elementary school to instruct students on

how to transcend their drawings into abstract non-representational posterized photographic negatives. The elementary students then visit the high school in order to be taught the steps involved in turning posterized negatives into positive photographic prints in the darkroom. Paired teams of

buddies alternate between the darkroom-printing project and a tour of the high school art facilities. While in the darkroom, safety procedures are stressed as well as the steps for making photographs without using cameras.

Because the schools believe that their joint visual arts project should be viewed by many, they have arranged for their students' work to be displayed in local businesses. To make this a true community effort, the schools enlist parents, community members, and students to help matte, frame, and hang the finished pieces of art. An opening night exhibition is a way to share the students' work with the schools and the local community; the exhibition also allows the students to receive validation as artists.

Students

Three classes of fourth graders and three advanced photography groups closely work together in this project.

Staff

A team of high school art teachers, fourth grade teachers, and parent volunteers design and implement this project.

Materials and Facilities

In order for the project to be a success, some basic art supplies are necessary such as a high-quality watercolor paper, brushes, watercolors, and black pens for inking. At the high school level, overhead transparencies and Sharpie markers are used for inking the posterizations. Photo paper, chemicals, and a darkroom are necessary for creating the photographic images.

Outside Resources

The local coffee shop and its employees were recruited as helpers and a venue for the gala opening night exhibition and gallery space.

Overall Value

This project commands a sense of student respect and confidence for self and other artists. It allows students to see connections across ages and curriculum and increases enthusiasm for the arts throughout the schools and the community. Viewing the world through different perspectives increases acceptance of human differences.



More Information:

Sue Bark, Westfield High School, 4700 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly, VA 20151 – 703-488-6300 – Principal: Dale Rumberger
Precious Werner, Virginia Run Elementary School, 15450 Martins Hundred Drive, Centreville, VA 20120 – 703-988-8900 – Principal: Teresa Hicks

Keep it REAL (Responsible Effort Advances Leadership)

George Asiello and Carlyn Floyd



Keep It REAL (Responsible Effort Advances Leadership) is a behavior modification program designed to correlate student behavior and leadership opportunities for students with emotional disabilities. Studies have proven behavior modification programs with token economy and level systems to be effective for managing student behavior with a direct link to improving self-esteem and peer relationships.

To more effectively use such a system, **Keep It REAL** offers students with improved behavior, self-esteem, and peer relationships (as determined through point sheets and the level system), the opportunity to lead their peers through activities

of choice. With their increased success, **Keep It REAL** students lead their peers into the activities of choice with guidance and supervision from staff. This piece of the program affords students on level 3, 4, or 5 (of a 1-5 level system, 5 being highest) the chance to lead an activity such as basketball, chess, or crafts or lead a piece of a project like a play or a garden project. Additionally, the garden project is a cross-curricular activity, tying together math, science, English, and art.

Students

About 70 students with emotional disabilities in grades seven and eight participate.

Staff

All teachers and staff members engage students in the level system as a center-wide behavior management tool to ensure consistency throughout the program.

Materials and Facilities

Materials include the point sheets and items necessary for the student-led activities. (cooking supplies, chessboards, craft materials, and garden supplies).

Outside Resources

No outside resources are necessary.

Overall Value

When students with emotional disabilities successfully participate in leadership activities, they develop a sense of pride and accomplishment that directly affects their self-esteem. As a result of increased self-esteem and self-confidence, students become more adept at taking academic and social risks, which, prior to these positive experiences, would never have been possible. Success breeds success. The school anticipates that, as students develop these skills, there will be a direct impact on their ability to perform on the Standards of Learning tests and Promotion Benchmarks.



More Information:

Carlyn Floyd, Mark Twain Center

4700 Franconia Road, Alexandria, VA 22310 – 703-313-3711 – Principal: Deirdre Lavery

ADHD Teens Talk

Diane Cormicle, Gay Leutbecker, Jason McBeth, Elizabeth Oaks, and Susan Stimart



ADHD Teens Talk is a teacher-training program featuring a video of a moderated discussion with six ADHD high school students who describe how attention issues have affected their learning. More importantly, they share strategies that have helped them become successful learners.

The students featured in the video meet several times in small groups with special education staff members and psychologists to plan for taping their discussion. They share their personal experiences throughout their high school years describing specific teaching strategies, after-school help, the impact of extracurricular activities, and the importance of a positive pupil-teacher relationship.

Using a prepared packet of materials, high schools show the video to teachers

following a short introductory information session. Using prepared discussion questions, teachers discuss the ideas and teaching strategies presented by the ADHD student panel featured in the video. Follow-up questionnaires are completed to determine if teachers come away with increased awareness about ADHD as well as new teaching strategies to employ in the classroom. Questionnaire results are shared with the faculty and administration of each school that participates in the viewing of the video.

Students

All FCPS high school students who experience ADHD benefit from increased teacher awareness about the needs of students with diverse learning styles.

Staff

The program was developed by high school special education teachers, school psychologists, CHADD advisors, parents, and a developmental pediatrician in consultation with principals and an assistant principal. It is implemented by a cross-disciplinary focus group.

Materials and Facilities

The video, VCR, and large screen TV are necessary for this information session. The meeting room should be large enough to accommodate the audience.

Outside Resources

Additional staff members who are knowledgeable about ADHD are helpful to address teachers' questions.

Overall Value

The program increases teacher awareness of the effects of ADHD on student learning. Successful teaching strategies that help students manage their academic day are presented in the students' own words. After viewing the video, teachers develop increased empathy for the significant impact that ADHD has on every aspect of the school day, and they come away with concrete suggestions for effective teaching strategies.



More Information:

Gay Leutbecker, Langley High School (in cooperation with McLean High School) – 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA 22101
703-287-2700 – William Clendaniel, Langley HS; 703-714-5700 – Donald Weinheimer, McLean HS

Nature Photography

Dee O'Hara



This program is designed to work with students in moderately mentally handicapped and autism classes. The goal is to introduce students to some of the basic elements of photography using disposable cameras. The students are taken to a local park to discuss object identification, color differentiation, and the general appeal of photos. Then they take their photos. Once they have chosen their best photos, students learn to use a scanner and create a presentation. The culminating activity is a presentation by the students to their peers and administrative personnel.

The students are evaluated on the basis of participation and successful production of a finished project. This may be used as an alternative assessment for some of these students and/or may serve as a part of a portfolio.

Students

Students from the moderately mentally handicapped and autism classes participate in the program.

Staff

Three special education teachers and one assistant implement this program.

Materials and Facilities

Disposable cameras, a computer lab, along with classroom space are used.

Outside Resources

Students are taken on a field trip to a nearby park to take their photographs and on a shopping visit to a local store to purchase their cameras.

Overall Value

The students have the opportunity to experience a variety of life skills such as: riding public transportation, behaving properly in a store, exchanging money, following directions, and working collaboratively. In addition, they work on fine motor skills, keyboarding skills, sentence composition and writing, and public-speaking skills. The students have the opportunity to do well in a new area and learn to enjoy photography and nature, to which many of them have never been exposed. The students also have a great sense of personal accomplishment that may be integral in their portfolios.



More Information:

Dee O'Hara, West Potomac High School
6500 Quander Road, Alexandria, VA 22307 – 703-718-2500 – Principal: Eric Brent

Inspired Writing

Christopher Adams, Betty Jenkins, Paula Messer, Lorraine Ryan, and Joanne Schilling



Research

Will the use of a prewriting and composing software, a writing apprehension attitude survey, and a rubric to guide writing help improve the writing products of fourth grade students?

Fourth grade students will take a writing apprehension attitude survey as a pre-project data collection tool so that teachers can evaluate the student needs. Students will write to a prompt as a preproject data collection tool. Teachers will be trained in the use of the SOL rubric to evaluate the prewriting samples. Teachers will also be instructed in the use of *Inspiration* software and will plan writing projects for the children to use the software as a prewriting tool as they take assigned topics

through the steps of the writing process. *Inspiration* allows students to brainstorm, then organize, add notes, view an outline, and easily revise their writing. Sessions for the use of the software as a prewriting tool will be held in the computer lab and the classrooms.

At the end of the school year, students will retake the writing attitude survey, and the scores will be compared with those from the beginning of the project. The final writing piece of each student will be evaluated with the Standards of Learning (SOL) rubric to assess each student's progress. The students' performance on the fifth grade SOL writing test the following year will also be compared with their fourth grade writing pieces.

Students

Two classrooms of fourth grade regular education and LD inclusion students will be a part of the research project.

Staff

Two fourth grade classroom teachers, the reading specialist, the LD inclusion teacher, and the school-based technology specialist will conduct the research.

Materials and Facilities

The activities will take place in the regular classroom using a mobile lab of computers and in the computer lab.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are needed, but parent volunteers may help facilitate the writing process.

Overall Value

The team of teachers anticipates that the students in the program will improve their attitudes toward and their performance in writing to a prompt as evidenced by the rubric they are using, the attitude survey they are employing, and the fifth grade SOL scores of the students in the following year. Also, teachers will become more familiar with the writing process and the scoring rubric to better tailor their instruction to meet student needs.



More Information:

Paula Messer, Great Falls Elementary School
701 Walker Road, Great Falls, VA 22066 – 703-757-2100 – Principal: Dorothy Clark

H²O for Kindergartners and Parents: Help to Own Literacy with Our Waterford Reading Program

Judy Baldwin, Karen Davis, Vicki Duling, and Margaret Tenenbaum



Research

What happens when parents use and reinforce at home (using the same materials) the beginning reading strategies that are introduced in the classroom setting?

A team of teachers would like to validate the effectiveness of parental scaffolding at home using the same songs and stories that are used in the Waterford program during the school day. Kindergarten students' scores on the spring PALS test will be compared to the following year's fall Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) scores of the students participating in the Waterford Early Reading program.

Students using the Waterford Early Reading program will take home videos and books that restate the material previously introduced in daily lessons at school. Parents will be encouraged to

help the students at home reading the books and singing the familiar songs to reinforce beginning reading strategies. As families use and feel ownership of these supportive reading materials and videotapes that reinforce the phonemic awareness songs, rhymes, and stories, the kindergarten students will develop ownership of the knowledge and the materials of literacy. For many students, these materials may be the only literacy materials in the home.

A parent survey will be used as a pre- and postmeasure of the amount of support given by parents to each kindergarten student throughout the school year. The results of this survey will then be correlated with the reading achievement of the same students in first grade. The kindergarten teacher, the noncategorical program teacher, and the reading specialist will periodically collect additional observation data outlining individual early reading behavior progress.

Students

Kindergarten and first grade students will be tracked to establish the validity of the Waterford program.

Staff

A team made up of a kindergarten teacher, a primary noncategorical program teacher, and a reading teacher will collaborate to implement and research the program.

Materials and Facilities:

The use of the Waterford Early Reading program, along with videos and books supporting a home-school connection, will be used to support this effort.

Outside Resources:

No outside resources will be used.

Overall Value:

The impact of the use of literacy materials in the home of young children has been documented through extensive research in the field of family literacy. Determining the impact of consistent use of phonemic awareness materials at home that complements the instruction at school will help the team educate parents about the importance of their role in the educational partnership. In addition, the expansion of communication and the impact on the family as a whole with respect to literacy will never be fully measured. Use of the Waterford program has primarily been isolated in FCPS to schools with Success by Eight and Project Excel funding. Although this school is not involved in either of these programs, the teachers feel the use of the Waterford program has been beneficial to the academic achievement of the students. This research project will begin to help the teachers identify the impact of the parents' interest and efforts in helping educate their children.



More Information:

Karen Davis, Little Run Elementary School
4511 Olley Lane, Fairfax, VA, 20322 – 703-503-3500 – Principal: Janet Johnson

Literally Plugged In

Lisa Turco and Joy Watkins



Research

Will underachieving readers develop a more positive attitude toward reading when they are given the opportunity to choose and read books successfully at their interest level?

The teachers want to "plug in" their underachieving students to portable tape players so that they are simultaneously listening to an audiobook while following along in a book of the same title. In this way, they are not limited by their reading skills, which are often well below their intellectual development, but are free to choose from a wider range of books than ever before. Teachers believe books-on-tape will provide children with reading materials that will be easy for them to read because of the audio support. The activity will stimulate their interest because the books will match the students' cognitive level more appropriately than books they have been able to choose from in the past. Not only do the teachers want to see their underachieving readers carry *Harry Potter* around with them, but they want to provide a way for them to unlock Harry's magic.

This research is conducted during the Standards of Learning (SOL) after-school remediation program. This 11-week program meets two times per week for an hour and a half each day. Students use the books-on-tape program for about 30 minutes during each session. Students choose a book and its corresponding audio recording from a variety of titles. They use a portable tape player and are allowed to sit comfortably in the reading area where they listen to the story on tape as they follow along in the book. This allows them access to reading as a source of pleasure. They are not asked to do assignments related to the book; they are asked to simply share their thoughts and opinions about the book. Students are allowed to extend their reading by coming into the classrooms before school both during the after-school program and once the program is completed.

Asking students to read along with books-on-tape provides many benefits for the struggling reader. It provides visual and auditory input for the students. It models fluent reading, and it exposes students to a higher-level vocabulary. In addition, it introduces them to a variety of genres and capitalizes on their oral language strengths. It helps compensate for a lack of available literacy at home.

In order to assess changes in reading attitudes, pre- and postsurveys will be administered to both students and their classroom teachers. In addition, the teachers conducting the research will keep anecdotal records of observed positive reading behaviors.

Students

This program will work with 32 fourth and fifth grade underachieving readers, including children in both the LD and ESOL programs.

Staff

Two teachers of learning disabled students who are teaching reading in the after-school remediation program implement and conduct the research for this program.

Materials and Facilities

Each student needs a portable tape player and a variety of books and audiotapes from which to choose.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are needed.

Overall Value

The teachers feel that the students in the after-school remediation program will benefit from the research by developing a more positive attitude about reading. They feel that students will see reading in a new light and will be excited about the new choices that are available to them. One of the fifth grade students with a learning disability said it best: "I will be a lifelong reader because of books-on-tape." This is the effect the teachers hope to have on all their students.



More Information:

Joy Watkins, Bren Mar Park Elementary School
6344 Beryl Road, Alexandria, VA 22312 – 703-914-7200 – Principal: Susan Fitz

The Week in Review

Kelly Hiza and Trish Kyle



Research

Will a communication device with a prerecorded series of messages help to improve the pragmatic skills of students with severe disabilities who are nonverbal?

This study will assess the effectiveness of an augmentative communication device in increasing pragmatic language skills of students with severe disabilities. Students who are nonverbal have difficulty interacting with their environment and with people around them. Conversation is limited by a lack of resources to communicate with peers and other people in the general population. This project will give nonverbal students the chance to experience communication with others in a way they were unable to before. The Step-by-Step augmentative communication device allows a sequence of messages to be recorded for up to 75 seconds. By using a Step-by-Step switch, the prerecorded series of messages can be activated by the touch of a switch.

Data will be taken to record levels of independence when using the switch. Students will begin using the switch with verbal and physical prompting. As the students learn to use the Step-by-Step and gain experience

participating in conversations, prompting by staff members will be reduced to just verbal prompts and then to no prompts.

Prior to this project, students only had access to a single message switch, thereby limiting their ability to communicate with others in both school and community. This class started a project called the weekly reviewer. In the past, the reviewer used eye contact and switched to choose picture symbols that represented items they wanted to review for the class of projects and activities completed during the week. There was no conversation involved with this classroom job. To promote conversation and communication with these students, the weekly reviewer job has taken on a new role. The job now requires a student to present information (which he or she chooses) to the principal and other students in the school. The reviewers can choose to present completed activities, retell a story about the week, or simply talk about themselves. The choices made by the students promote self-advocacy and independence for these youngsters with severe disabilities. Including conversation with this weekly activity opens up many possibilities for communication and interaction that these students have not encountered before.

Students

The students involved in this project are elementary students (aged 6 to 11) with severe disabilities. The students are nonverbal and require complete assistance for mobility. They use wheelchairs and have limited range of motion. Using verbal

and physical prompts, students are able to activate switches to operate equipment and communicate with others.

Staff

Classroom staff members and speech and language clinicians will be involved in assessment.

Materials and Facilities

Step-by-Step communicator with levels is required for each student participating. Step-by-Step switches are portable and are easily used in any facility in both school and community.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are needed.

Overall Value

By using a Step-by-Step switch, students gain experience with other key areas of a functional curriculum: independence, social skills, community interaction, and personal management. Students learn to take turns, interact with others, react to social cues, and realize self-empowerment. This research project is not intended to focus on switch use and motor skills. It is a vehicle for students to use to hold conversations and learn pragmatic skills necessary to engage in social interaction throughout their lives. Communication is a basic human need, and social conversation is necessary for a happy and healthy life. The Step-by-Step switch will give students with severe disabilities access to a way to satisfy their basic human needs.



More Information:

Kelly Hiza, Kilmer Center

8102 Wolftrap Road, Vienna, VA 22182 – 571-226-8440 – Principal: Michael Marsallo

Choose to Read

Kathy Hermann and Audrey Reiter



The goal of the project is to expand the currently limited body of research on the effects of pleasure reading programs with high school ESOL students. While there is an overwhelming amount of research evidence supporting the use of pleasure reading programs with elementary-level native speakers of English, there is much less evidence support-

ing the use of these programs with older second language learners.

The pleasure-reading program is implemented in September and continues through June. At the beginning of every class period, each student selects a book or other reading material from the class library and reads quietly for 15 to 20 minutes. The teacher reads with the students. The students are not required to submit book reports or any accountability measure.

Study data is collected through student surveys, anecdotal evidence, Degrees of Reading Power test scores, reading logs, and book checkout records.

Students

Approximately 100 beginner, intermediate, and literacy ESOL students participate in the program.

Staff

Two ESOL teachers conduct the research.

Materials and Facilities

The project requires a wide variety of high-interest low-level books, magazines, and newspapers. Popular reading materials are books about countries, animals, and nature; biographies of current pop culture stars; simplified biographies of historical figures; and comic strip collections. Bookcases or crates for storing the books are also necessary. In addition, it is useful to obtain a comfortable chair and some READ posters to create an environment conducive to reading. Finally, library cards and card sleeves are useful to track book checkouts.

Outside Resources

No outside resources are needed.

Overall Value

The teacher-researchers expect that students' reading comprehension in English and their motivation to read in English will increase significantly. Furthermore, the pleasure reading program supports many ESOL program alignment goals for students: to read a variety of materials to build vocabulary, acquire language patterns, and develop fluency; to set their own purpose for reading; to read a variety of materials for fluency and pleasure; and to relate reading to their own experience.



More Information:

Audrey Reiter, Annandale High School
4700 Medford Drive, Annandale, VA 22003 – 703-642-4100 – Principal: Rodney Manuel

We All Can Talk

Erica Wyman

We All Can Talk is an adaptation of **Enhancing the Kindergarten Language Experience With Storytelling Prop** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2002*). This initiative provides an opportunity for nonverbal preschool children to participate actively in daily storytelling activities through the use of an augmentative communication device. Developmentally delayed students engage effectively in active storytelling by selecting a picture and hearing prerecorded speech that relates to a story. Children increase motivation and self-concept as a result of the successful group storytelling experience.

More Information:

Erica Wyman, Deer Park Elementary School
10159 Carlbern Drive, Centreville, VA 20120
703-802-5000 – Principal: Douglass Brooks



Growing a Garden of Learners

Gail Ritchie

Growing a Garden of Learners is an adaptation of **It's a Small World After All** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2002*). This hands-on and minds-on program encourages students to use emerging literacy skills to facilitate concept acquisition related to classroom units of study. The classroom year is framed within the metaphor of gardening: preparing the garden, planting the seeds, tending the sprouts, climbing up the beanstalk, nurturing the blossoms, preparing for the harvest, and harvesting the fruit. Within this theme, author and artist studies are incorporated, as well POS and SOL objectives for language arts, science, and social studies. The original program, **It's A Small World After All**, used a theme of traveling around the world to integrate literature studies with conceptual units of study. This adaptation builds on that idea and adds artists of the month and an arts connection to further enhance the literature-conceptual integration.

More Information:

Gail Ritchie, Kings Park Elementary School
5400 Harrow Way, Springfield, VA 22151
703-426-7000 – Principal: Mary Agnes Garman

Headlines from History: You are There!

Alexandra Wong

Headlines From History: You Are There! is an adaptation of **We're Living History** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2002*). It is a writing project that allows intermediate sixth grade students to collaborate to write and publish a class newspaper that synthesizes concepts taught in American history. English speakers of other language (ESOL) students work in small cooperative groups to write, edit, and revise an original, historically accurate newspaper about the Civil War era. Ultimately, students use desktop publishing software to create the final newspaper, refining their writing skills while increasing their interest in writing. The program was adapted to focus on three important areas of achievement for sixth grade students: writing to inform, researching a topic, and reviewing key social studies concepts.

More Information:

Alexandra Wong, Centre Ridge Elementary School
14400 New Braddock Road, Centreville VA 20121
703-227-2600 – Principal: Joyce Dantzler



Musical Manatees

Becki Jones

An adaptation of **Sea Turtle Rhapsody** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2002*), **Musical Manatees** is an interactive student-created musical consisting of facts about manatees delivered by characters accompanied by recorder tunes. Students use their research skills to learn about manatees and their habitats. After they have assembled the facts, they create a timeline of how they want the facts to occur in a musical. Students then select manatee characters to deliver the information. As the characters are introduced, students create special tunes on their recorders based on a certain number of pitches learned. This program teaches children to learn to read and finger the notes of the soprano recorder. Students integrate social studies, science, language arts, and music Standards of Learning as they develop and perform the musical.

More Information:

Becki Jones, Herndon Elementary School
630 Dranesville Road, Herndon, VA 20170
703-326-3100 – Principal: Carolyn Gannaway

Rainforest Roll Call

Elisa DeFrank, Mary Hendricks, Pat Mudrick,
Rose Lynne Schwartz, and Linda White

RainForest Roll Call, an adaptation of **Sea Turtle Rhapsody** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2002*), is a multidisciplinary unit focusing on the rainforest biome and ecological concerns. Second grade teachers, the librarian, and the music teacher work with students to research animals, sounds, and characteristics of the rainforest. The art teacher supervises the creation of a rainforest mural while the technology specialist teaches students to research animal projects using computer technology. Students create costumes, scenery, dances, and movement for an original musical written by the music teacher based on *The Great Kapok Tree*. Through this study, students complete objectives from the Standards of Learning (SOL) as well as objectives from the music Program of Studies (POS).

More Information:

Linda White, Haycock Elementary School
6616 Haycock Road, Falls Church, VA 22043
703-531-4000 – Principal: Jay McClain



Teaching About Animal Habitats Through Literature

Karol Glaspy and Mary Ann Nash

Adapted from **Exploring Math Concepts Through Literature** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2001*), **Teaching About Animal Habitats Through Literature** provides second grade students with a close-up look at animal habitats. Students work in cooperative learning groups while exploring new science books that incorporate simple text and colorful photographs. Students write sentences and draw pictures about what they learn from their investigations. The books' accessible text and emphasis on visual materials help students to understand the diversity of our world's habitats.

More Information:

Mary Ann Nash, Belle View Elementary School
6701 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, VA 22307
703-660-8300 – Principal: C. Robert Davis

Teaching About Cells Through Literature

Melissa Tisnado

Teaching About Cells Through Literature was adapted from **Exploring Math Concepts Through Literature** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2001*). Designed for fifth graders, the program provides students with photo-laden print resources to explore cell biology concepts like the immune system and DNA. The books selected consist primarily of full-page color pictures so that the science concepts are conveyed visually. The larger-than-life illustrations help students comprehend what is invisible to the naked eye. Cooperative learning groups then produce illustrated acrostics with the information gleaned from the books

More Information:

Melissa Tisnado, Belle View Elementary School
6701 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, VA 22307
703-660-8300 – Principal: C. Robert Davis



Teaching About Environmental Conservation Through Literature

Carol Allard

Adapted from **Exploring Math Concepts Through Literature** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2001*), **Teaching About Environmental Conservation Through Literature** connects the principles of environmental conservation science with the real world by using new photo-rich trade books about topics like nuclear waste, air pollution, recycling, and water pollution. The full-color pictures convey the concepts visually to third grade students. Students work in pairs to gather information from the books and produce illustrated works based on their enhanced knowledge about our environment.

More Information:

Carol Allard, Belle View Elementary School
6701 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, VA 22307
703-660-8300 – Principal: C. Robert Davis

Teaching Weather Through Literature

Carolyn Bush and Mark Tierney

Teaching Weather Through Literature, an adaptation of **Exploring Math Concepts Through Literature** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2001*), serves first grade students and provides them with recently published print resources to guide them through the exploration of weather-related concepts. These books contain easy-to-read text and rely heavily on vivid color photographs to present weather-related information. They help emergent readers fully comprehend the weather phenomena in our world. Students use the information collected from the books to write about and illustrate the weather topics they research.

More Information:

Mark Tierney, Belle View Elementary School
 6701 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, VA 22307
 703-660-8300 – Principal: C. Robert Davis

Look Who's Conversing

Barbara Brand and Catriona Stavropoulos

Look Who's Conversing is an adaptation of **Look Who's Talking** (see *Foundations of Excellence 2002*). This program uses headsets, microphones, and a wireless computer lab. **Look Who's Conversing** creates an environment for two students to converse, record, and save their conversation and to receive feedback from their peers and teachers. In the past, students could record only a monologue onto the computer. To replicate a more natural language, students need to be understood by other speakers and be able to respond appropriately. This program provides students with a new and innovative conversational environment.

More Information:

Barbara Brand, West Springfield High School
 6100 Rolling Road, Springfield, VA 22152
 703-660-8300 – Principal: David Smith

THE FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE TEACHERS NETWORK – IMPACT II



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