

LITERACY NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Literacy Connections</i>	1
<i>Spring Break</i>	1
<i>Faye Brownlie</i>	2
<i>Primary Songs</i>	2
<i>Adrienne Gear</i>	2
<i>Young Authors</i>	3
<i>Online Resources</i>	3
<i>Betty Schultze</i>	3
<i>Contact Information</i>	4
<i>Literacy Council</i>	4

Upcoming Dates & Events:

- March 11: Faye Brownlie presents on Lit Circles
- April 9: Primary Songs Worth Singing! workshop
- April 9: Young Authors' Conference registration packages due
- April 9: Battle of the Books Zone Competition
- April 16: Battle of the Books District Competition
- April 17: Betty Schultze presents on Building the Reading-Writing Connection
- April 17: Adrienne Gear presents on Revisiting Reading Power and Reading Power Lit Circles
- May 2: Young Authors' Conference

LITERACY CONNECTIONS

I've been thinking a lot lately about the listening-speaking-reading-writing connection. Student conversation encourages deeper understanding and more insightful responses. Likewise, for many students reading should contribute to improved writing and writing to improved reading. Since literacy skills are highly interconnected, I wonder why, for some students, certain literacy skills grow yet others stagnate. And I wonder what I can do to support more uniform development.

In February Kathy Pantaleo presented *Engaging Students Using Literature Circles*. I enjoyed her session on how she organizes groups, selects books, and scaffolds student conversations and learning. I shared her enthusiasm for something new for her and her grade 6/7 students—blogging using Kidblog:

<http://kidblog.org>

This once-a-week 30 minute activity on a thoughtful open-ended reader response prompt followed voracious reading and brief yet focused

discussions. What surprised Kathy (and other teachers who viewed the student blogging examples) was the quality of the reading, writing, and thinking in the blogs—and how much students' skills improved over three months.

Kathy strategically created a learning environment that helped students make all kinds of literacy connections:

- Students spent time practising literature circles with shorter texts before moving to novels they read at their own rates.
- They had daily time to read and held their thinking with sticky notes and a simple four quadrant sheet.
- They discussed their reading in small, flexible groups once a week.
- After practising blogging once a week and receiving personalized feedback from their teacher, students transitioned to posting



their entries for each other to read.

- Students then were taught how to comment thoughtfully.

Many elements likely contributed to student achievement including clear expectations, engaging texts, active reading, conversation, open-ended prompts, personalized feedback, and, later, an authentic interactive peer audience.

This classroom experience isn't unique, but for me it highlights the importance and potential of purposefully connecting the literacy skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

I'm looking forward to Betty Schultze's April 17 presentation to primary teachers on *Building the Reading-Writing Connection: Paired Lessons in Reading and Writing*.

SPRING BREAK FOR FAMILIES



The TRND Kamloops Libraries are offering **Spring Break for Families** activities.

The North Kamloops Library will offer drop-in activities from 10 a.m. to noon each weekday. Children may colour, create a kite tail, add artwork to the Spring Break Mural—and read!

The Kamloops Library (downtown) features a Family

Playroom on Monday and Friday 10 a.m. to noon, a Family Game Night on Tuesday 6-8 p.m. and a Lego Night on Thursday 6-8 p.m.

Please note children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, call 250-554-1124.

EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY

1. will read something he or she chooses
2. will read something accurately
3. will read something he or she understands
4. will write something personally meaningful
5. will talk to peers about reading and writing
6. will listen to a fluent adult read aloud

~ *Richard Allington and Rachael E. Gabriel (2012) outline six essentials of balanced literacy instruction for students of all ages.*

LITERATURE CIRCLES: MARCH 11

GRAND CONVERSATIONS, THOUGHTFUL RESPONSES



Presenter: **Faye Brownlie**

Date: **March 11**

Time: 3:30-5:30

Location: HGEC Room 1A/B

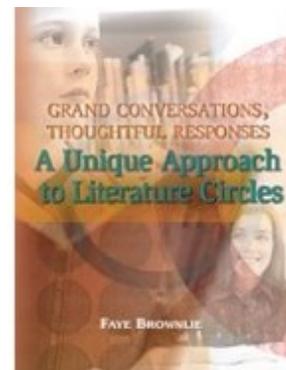
Rural: video-conferencing available

Audience: Upper primary to secondary educators

Description: In this approach to lit circles, there are no roles assigned, no set amounts of reading, lots of discussion, journal responses and a sprinkling of comprehension strategies—a best bet for creating readers who read!

Registration: <http://goo.gl/4T4nDB> or contact *Tricia Persad*

District Library literature circle packages will be on display!



PRIMARY SONGS WORTH SINGING! APRIL 9

Presenter: **Jasmine Morrison**

Date: **April 9**

Location: HGEC Room 6

Audience: Early Primary Educators

Description: It was Plato who said music “is a more potent instrument than any other for education.” Because music uses both sides of the brain, songs can be a powerful way to address many of children’s

needs. Songs are kinesthetic, auditory, oral, social, and fun! And they’re easy to implement!

In this hands-on workshop (with lyrics provided!), we’ll practise songs and actions that help get children’s attention and improve their focus. We’ll also learn songs about the alphabet, numbers,

rhyme, reading strategies, and body parts. Some Smartboard songs will be shown, too.

Teachers are encouraged to bring a favourite song to share!

Registration: <http://goo.gl/sUp7II> or contact *Tricia Persad*

REVISITING READING POWER & READING POWER LITERATURE CIRCLES APRIL 17



Presenter: **Adrienne Gear**

Date: **April 17**

Time: 9:00-2:30

Location: HGEC

Audience Gr. 3-8 Educators

Revisiting Reading Power

Are you new to Reading Power or maybe familiar with Reading Power but would like a refresher of some of the top key ideas? In the morning Adrienne will share some new thinking about how Reading Power has evolved and clear up some misconceptions that may have arisen since it first was introduced. Adrienne will model some lessons and share some of her latest “picks” to support the strategies.

Reading Power Lit Circles

Are you tired of the “whole class novel study?” Are your students “taking roles” for literature circles but not engaging in authentic conversations about books? In the afternoon Adrienne will share her ideas for organizing your schedule, promoting authentic book discussions, engaging response activities and assessment. She will share her “top pick” novels.

Registration: Complete form sent to school literacy contacts.

YOUNG AUTHORS' CONFERENCE MAY 2



2014 will mark the 35th anniversary of the Young Authors' Conference. This year's conference takes place at TRU on **Friday, May 2.**

The Young Authors' Conference is an annual event bringing together student authors in our district to work with professional writers. Students

in grades 4 through 12 are eligible to participate. To enter, a student is asked to submit a manuscript of prose or poetry (up to 1 000 words) to their school's YAC contact and/or selection committee to review.

Basic online registration is required as well as the submission of a more detailed hard copy registration package. The deadline to submit registration packages to the HGEC is **Wednesday, April 9.**

2014 Guest Authors:
Grades 4-6
kc dyer: Build Your Own Time Machine

Lee Edward Fodi: Welcome to the Monster Shop
Kaillie George: Magical Animal Adoption Agency
Jacquie Pearce: Unfolding the Hero's Journey
Crystal J. Stranaghan: Writing from Pictures

Grades 7-12
Carrie Mac: How to Turn Your Bad Self into Good Writing
James McCann: Writing The End of the World
Shawn Peters: Free Donuts and Tension in Writing

Please see the YAC poster. For more information, consult the YAC website: <http://yac.sd73.bc.ca/>

"It is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations--something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own."

- Author Katherine Patterson

ONLINE RESOURCES

District Librarian Andrea Wallin recently reminded me about quality district-subscribed resources available to all staff, students and parents. Please see your school's teacher-librarian for login information.

[Worldbook Online](#)--research tools and multimedia resources for K-12

[EBSCO Bundle](#)--

comprehensive academic research tool

[Mediawareness](#)--quality Internet Safety information and programs for K-12

[KnowBC](#)--BC reference and history resource, locate primary documents here!

[CBC](#)--Access CBC videos through Learn 360.

[NFB](#)--Find most of the Nation-

al Film Board Canadian content videos streamed here.

Wonderopolis is an online resource recommended by *Catching Readers Before They Fall* authors Pat Johnson and Katie Keier. The website features nonfiction texts and short video clips on all kinds of K-12 student wonderings: <http://wonderopolis.org/>

BUILDING THE READING-WRITING CONNECTION: PAIRED LESSONS IN READING & WRITING APRIL 17



Presenter: **Betty Schultze**

Date: **April 17**

Time: 9:00-2:30

Location: HGEC

Audience: K-2 Educators

Description: In this workshop, Betty Schultze, co-author of *What's Next for this Beginning Writer?* and author of *Basic Tools for Beginning Writers*, explores reading-writing connections by pairing lessons from *What's Next for this Beginning Writer?* with reading lessons and activities that reinforce learning in both areas. Using student writing samples and texts from Scho-lastic's *Literacy Place for the*

Early Years resource, teachers will learn how to provide students with the strategies, craft techniques, and skills that authors use and readers learn to recognize. This practical, hands-on workshop will provide teachers with resources to ensure beginning authors and readers are inspired, confident, and move forward, step by step, to competency.

Registration: Complete form sent to school literacy contacts.



Consult **School District No. 73 Professional Learning** website for information about literacy and other content-area workshops: <http://t.sd73.bc.ca/34>

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Consult **School District No. 73 Literacy Resources** website for resources and links:
literacy.sd73.bc.ca



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact me if you have any questions about language arts curriculum, teaching strategies, resources, or assessments. Feel free to let me know if there's a workshop or professional learning opportunity you'd like facilitated. I can meet with you and/or your staff at your school or at the HGEC.

WEBSITE



I'm in the process of updating the **School District No. 73 Literacy Resources** website. This website is specifically for educators. I've included some helpful links and resources on reading, writing, assessment, and curriculum—and I will add more resources as time permits! I welcome suggestions about content teachers would find helpful: literacy.sd73.bc.ca

PRIMARY READING ASSESSMENT

The Primary Reading Assessment demonstration videos used at the October 29th PRA in-service are now available for teachers to view through their Zimbra accounts.

- 1) Click on [MYS73](#) to the left of your Zimbra email screen *(under Zimlets)
- 2) Click on [Teacher Resources](#)
- 3) Click on [SD73 Literacy](#)

Thanks to John Bowers, Christey Hughes, and Wayne Pinette for technological assistance!

Thanks, also, to the school representatives who updated binders, requested missing books, and shared information with staffs. Feedback about the PRA is welcome and helpful.

SOUTH CENTRAL LITERACY COUNCIL



The guiding principles of the SCLC are to:

- improve the quality of reading instruction;
- disseminate research and information about reading;
- encourage the life-time reading habit.

You may also contact Mike Bowden or Tricia Persad. There are three types of membership involvement with varying levels of commitment.

Basic membership simply requires membership in the International Reading Association (IRA)!

The South Central Literacy Council (SCLC) is in the process of being formed.

The SCLC is an organization of professionals collaborating to enhance literacy in the South Central region of British Columbia, Canada. This organization is part of the [British Columbia Literacy Council](#), the [Canadian Network of IRA Councils](#) and the [International Reading Association](#).

If you'd like to know more about the SCLC or are interested in becoming a member, please see the SCLC website: <http://literacyinbc.weebly.com/>