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content area. It is through transparent modeling of a variety of literacy strategies in a wide range of subjects that children develop the literacy skills they will need to be successful in the workplace of tomorrow.

No Child Left Behind, Adequate Yearly Progress, and the curricular mandates that flow from these initiatives are not going to go away. Teachers can respond to the mandates without abandoning good instructional practices. An African proverb says, "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for life." So it is with good teaching. When teachers use an instructional model that integrates literacy skill development into content area instruction, they give children tools that will enable them to learn independently. In addition to empowering children, integrated literacy instruction is an efficient use of time within the classroom. It allows for the development of reading and writing proficiencies in real-world contexts, while at the same time developing content area knowledge. Integrated

literacy instruction in the content areas provides opportunities for expanding the breadth and depth of the learning experience and creates an instructional environment that fosters the development of the critical literacy skills necessary to integrate information from across a wide range of informational sources.

In our rush to respond to the "tyranny of time" and the need to "cover the curriculum," our paths sometimes become blurred. Our children need critical literacy skills in order to navigate the volumes of textual and visual information they will encounter on an hourly basis day in and day out. It is not enough to "cover the curriculum," and say we did it. We must "cover the children" as Roach Van Allen reminded us. We can do that by taking the time to provide the best teaching practices in meaningful ways so that children do learn, do become critical thinkers, and are competent readers and writers. If that means rethinking and reusing our time—going beyond covering the curriculum to really teaching children—so be it. That is the job of a teacher!

If I Had Helping Hands

BY PEGGY HART

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If I had a magic wand, I would wish for "Helping Hands." With my Helping Hands, I would be able to reach out to all the schools in Michigan and all the students within these schools. My "Helping Hands" would include community and parent volunteers who would be offering their time, money, resources, or assistance for students' literacy development all across Michigan. No longer would I read in the newspaper that some schools have received an "A" and others a "C" or "D" for their teachers' and students' performances. Instead, I would see all schools receiving an "A" because we would all be working together to address the literacy needs of all students in our state.

How can we label schools with a grade or a score when the grade does not reflect the number of books, computers, papers, pencils, desks, educational materials and supplies, or resources available to these

schools? In their article, Neuman and Celano (2001) cite a lack of equitable funding of resources for schools and libraries in many communities. Others (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Stanovich, West, & Harrison,



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1995) report differential access to print resources and variations in environmental opportunities for literacy learning. Certainly these inequities and variations exist in Michigan. However, the inequities and variations remain unknown to many.

Certainly, if we look beyond the doors of the school buildings, we would see many teachers, principals, parents, and children trying their best. Does that "D" show the sincere efforts of these people, people who invested their time, love, and energy helping students improve their literacy?

I have had multiple experiences working with schools that have limited access to print resources and varied environmental opportunities. I have seen classrooms where scissors, paper, and crayons did not exist. The books showed the wear of numerous hands that had turned the pages while discovering the joys of reading. I didn't, however, see many books with a publishing date in the 2000s or 1990s. Through grants, or by purchasing crayons, markers, scissors, or books myself, I have seen the numbers of resources increase for a few of these schools. But how about the other schools? And what happens after the funding cycle of a grant?

Through grants or school district funding sources, I have also had occasions to bring teachers, principals, and parents within these schools professional development opportunities. After co-teaching a lesson with one classroom teacher, for example, I had a young boy come up and tug on my dress, begging me not leave. He wanted us to read and write more with his class. I feel certain that his message was heard and his teacher and others will be reading and writing more in his class.

In another school, I saw students hard at work, practicing a choral reading of Martin Luther King's speech for a parent program. As a result of a multicultural grant in this school, teachers learned how to create and implement choral readings. The teachers then decided to integrate this strategy across the curriculum by creating a choral reading from Dr. King's speech, "I Have a Dream." Remarkably, the sixth-grade students then took the choral reading a step further by composing a song, in harmony, about Dr. King to share with their parents that night. The parents, teachers, students, and principals in that school district became so empowered by this multicultural grant that they decided to share what they had learned with their community through a multicultural fair the next year. They wanted to make the program

an ongoing part of their curriculum. Through this effort, they were able to get parents and community members to provide additional funding and support for the fair. As one can see, a ripple effect of helping hands emerged for this school district.

A few years later, I saw eyes beam with pride as young students read books to parents, university students, or their peers. The parents and university students who were interactively reading with these students were part of an AmeriCorps tutoring program. The students, who were their tutees, exclaimed, "Reading is better for me because I read better. I know more words because of the tutor." In turn, their tutors reported, "Community service is definitely an obligation," or "There is no greater gift that you can give back to a community than just volunteer service."

As I listened to the tutors' words, I decided I should consider their words more deeply. If I could help university students or parents learn how to successfully tutor children in the school through this grant, I should think of other ways to do community service. A year later, I decided to integrate a tutoring program within a literacy class that I taught at the university. My pre-service teachers and I are now the Helping Hands for a local school. A wonderful surprise occurred during this past fall semester. One of my students wrote a grant to receive additional funding for the tutoring program. Through her grant, our program will now have markers, scissors, magnetic letters, books, and many other supplies. My pre-service teacher has further inspired me to seek additional funding to integrate a parental component with the tutoring program.

If we want the literacy performance of our students to improve in Michigan and the nation at large, we all need to offer Helping Hands. As Neuman and Celano also pointed out, we need to advocate for equitable funding sources across all schools and within all communities.

There are a handful of success stories, stories where schools and communities have increased the literacy performance of its students. But how about the other schools? Or what happens after the funding cycle of the grants? As my sister reminded me recently, some people are making a difference, but there are still so many more students and schools that need help. If more of us work together and pool our resources, perhaps the differential access to print and the variations in environmental opportunities for literacy

learning might begin to change. For example, more of us could give up one or two of our lunch breaks each week to help tutor a student. Still others might want to tutor a student one or two mornings per week before going to work. Some businesses might want to begin a funding drive to bring more books or computers, printers, or computer hardware into schools with limited resources. Still other examples might include parents offering to set up a publishing center for students' writing in the evenings. More businesses could offer small grants to schools with limited resources. Other businesses might provide free advertising or commercials to advocate equitable funding sources for these schools. Equally powerful, community members of all ages could offer to come in and read books with children who have had limited resources in their homes or schools. Whatever transformations evolve will depend on each one of us chipping in as well as the rippling effect of the Helping Hands. I hope this article will inspire more to begin reaching out so that

all school receive an "A" in literacy performance. As we see these linked efforts evolve around us, perhaps our nation will become a safer, healthier, and more peaceful place to be.

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The Idea of Reading

BY PATRICIA BERGH

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I will never forget the response of a student in one of my earliest freshman composition courses. I had asked the class to prepare a persuasive paper in which they were to attempt to convince the reader of their own point of view about a subject of their choice, and to use resources as supporting evidence. This particular student came to my office after class, genuinely perplexed by the assignment. She explained that no one had ever solicited her opinion before on any issue of significance, and she had no idea where to begin. I asked her about any topics about which she held firm convictions, and offered several as examples. No, she replied, she had not really thought much about any of them. She brightened, as she added that her parents and her pastor had always been clear with her about their views of these matters. When I asked her about her own reactions, she again went blank, not knowing what I meant. She admitted that she probably felt the same way as her parents and pastor. She was unable to explain to me why that was so, other than that was what she always had been taught.

I was not prepared for such a pronouncement, being by nature quite outspoken and independent-minded myself. Yet



Patricia Bergh has been the dean of humanities at Mott Community College since 1995. One of her primary areas of study at the present is the interplay of conscious and unconscious thought processes, comprehension, and verbal articulation. She has also taught English, American studies, and film at Wayne State University and marketing at Oakland University.