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Learning for a Lifetime

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Learning for a Lifetime



EDITORIAL BY **MARK CONLEY AND CARMEN DYKEMA**

Seems like Spring has been coming on forever here in mid-Michigan. A neighbor of ours has one of those magnolia trees, you know the kind that really shouldn't grow in Michigan? He says that the buds have been peeking out ever so slowly this year, as if the tree is worried that it will get zapped just like last year. Maybe you feel a little like that tree. It won't be long before we're heavy into Michigan summer and the long winter will be a memory. Hope this edition of the *MRJ* finds you in an upbeat pre-summer mood.

This edition of the *MRJournal* contains a bit of something for everyone. In *Food as a Motivator*, June Brown offers a plethora of ideas for enlivening language teaching through the use of food. Many of us take substitute teachers for granted, happy that they offer the occasional respite from the classroom. Many of us would be ecstatic to have Bette Shellhorn as our substitute, given her thoughtful research on *Improving Classroom Talk*. You know you've been around the education patch for awhile when innovations and movements come back a few times over the years. Arden Ruth Post takes a look at the Whole

Language movement and asks some important questions about its contributions to education through its various incarnations. In a timely piece, Cecilia Schrenker provides numerous suggestions for getting kids to read over the summer. To round out our list of feature articles, Renee Webster and Sue Stephens describe a program they developed in Perry for *Developing Partnerships with Families*.

Elvy Rolle, a Lansing speech-language pathologist, shares a poem in this issue entitled *The Clock*. We are happy to report that Vera Milz is back this issue with her incomparable book reviews. Tom Tobias provides his special brand of mischief with his *Trends* cartoon.

As you will see for yourself as you peruse this issue, these articles exemplify the best of a key principle of the Michigan Reading Association, a commitment to learning for a lifetime in education.

If you have an idea you'd like to get into the *MRJournal*, please contact us at the address on the inside back cover. Remember, this is your journal and your voices keep it going strong. Have a great Spring!

Mark Conley

Carmen Dykema

Food as a Motivator: A Feast Across the Curriculum



ARTICLE BY **JUNE BROWN**

Teachers have always been held accountable for teaching their students skills; yet, one of the biggest myths about whole language is that teachers do not teach skills (Newman & Church, 1990). The confusion about skill instruction may come from the way that whole language teachers teach and reinforce skills within the context of real literature experiences, rather than as isolated drills. As more and more teachers look for meaningful ways to incorporate skills into real reading and writing experiences, the power of food as a motivator should not be overlooked. For example, one effective way to instill phonemic awareness in young children is to plan snack attacks to gobble up foods that contain certain letter sounds. If it is true that "the way to a person's heart is through the stomach," then children can learn letter sounds through their stomachs, too (Snyder, 1987). Using books to enhance phonics instruction has been studied previously. Trachtenburg (1990) recommended that phonics should be taught through children's literature and has published a list of trade books that repeat phonic elements. An extension of this idea would be to use literature about food in conjunction with phonics instruction.

In order to begin, teachers need to select some snack foods to represent specific letter sounds. They may want to refer to cookbooks to highlight foods unique to their own culture or community, i.e., quail and persimmons for rural areas. The following list of alphabetical snacks could serve as a springboard for teachers to create their own lists:

Munch on These Letter Sounds

- a apples, applesauce, apricots, asparagus, artichokes
- b "Bugles," bananas, bagels, berries, bubble gum, biscuits, butter
- c carrots, cookies, candy, celery, cauliflower, cornbread
- d doughnuts, dates, divinity, deviled eggs
- e eggs, "Eggos," eggplant
- f fish, fish crackers, fudge
- g gum, gum drops, gummy bears, gooseberries, gingersnaps, gelatin salad or fingers
- h ham, hominy, honey, hush puppies, honeydew, hard boiled eggs
- i ice cream, ice tea, icing
- j jello, juice, jelly, jam, jelly roll
- k krispy treats, kool aid, kidney beans, kiwi, Kohlrabi
- l lemonade, lemon drops, limeade, lima beans, lollipops, lettuce, licorice
- m M & Ms, marshmallows, melon, milk, macaroni, muffins
- n nuts, noodles
- o oranges, orange slices, olives, oatmeal, okra
- p peanuts, popcorn, pudding, punch, peaches, pears, potatoes, pizza, pumpkin pie, peas, persimmons
- q quick pizza made with English muffins, quail (rural areas), quick bread
- r raisins, rice, rolls, raspberries
- s soup, soda, salad, syrup, sandwiches, spaghetti
- t tea, taffy, tangerines, toast, tomatoes, toffee, tacos, tuna
- u gum, unbelievable dessert, Uncle Sam's cake, unique treats