

OVEC *NEWSBYTES*

Electronic Newsletter

Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative

October, 2005

Volume 1, Issue 1

Page 1

IN THIS ISSUE:

Teachers Trained for Training Teachers!

Toot Toot!! All Aboard!! The train is moving and stops are being planned at strategic classrooms all across the OVEC region. National Board Certified Teachers recently trained at OVEC to be Professional Development Providers are anticipating sharing their honed skills and talents with other teachers. . . .

Corrective Reading: Closing the Achievement Gap

How can we close the achievement gap in reading that exists between regular and special education students at the middle and high school levels?

Migrant Head Start Makes a Difference!

"Beep Beep!! We're driving through our second year in Early/Preschool Migrant Head Start." Edwin and Kimberly are two of the children who are receiving tremendous benefits from the Migrant Head Start program. . . .

Key Leadership Topics Addressed at Summer Institute

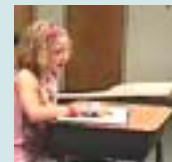
The theme of this year's OVEC Summer Leadership Institute was "School Culture, Learning Communities and Academic Rigor." One hundred and forty school and district leaders attended the institute held in July at Shelby County West Middle School. . . .

OVEC's GED Testing Soars!

The Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative's GED (General Education Development) testing service has given adult learners in the OVEC region the opportunity to recognize and reach their educational goals and potential. . . .

Early Reading First Empowers Children

Three- and four-year-olds in Early Reading First classrooms are gaining the pre-literacy skills that will prepare them to read and be successful in school! That's what Early Reading First is all about. . . .



Teachers Trained for Training Teachers!

Toot Toot!! All Aboard!! The train is moving and stops are being planned at strategic classrooms all across the OVEC region. National Board Certified Teachers who recently trained at OVEC to be Professional Development Providers are anticipating sharing their honed skills and talents with other teachers.

The idea of using OVEC districts' NBCTs as the initial cadre in the launch of a **PD provider pool** was born as a result of increasing demands for quality professional development.

"The talent and abilities of this group of professionals is phenomenal and should be used to take NBCTs to the next level of leadership," said Carol Wright, Director of Special Initiatives at OVEC. Having worked with over 150 teachers over the past five years, Carol has seen teacher growth first-hand as NBPTS candidates have prepared for National Board Certification.

Training at the PD Provider Seminar held at OVEC in July included the following:

- Assisting NBCTs in acquiring an entirely different set of skills to learn how to become instructional leaders among their peers and how to work with adult learners.
- Teaching NBCTs to build a repertoire of facilitation frameworks, protocols for leading adults in discussion, and even the most basic information about how to organize their time in a new role.

"I am totally confident working with my students and presenting all kinds of learning scenarios," said Leslie Thomas of Bullitt County, "but working with my peers is another story!"

"I have worked in teams with my colleagues to increase student learning and now I am excited about the prospect of actually being a 'teacher of teachers'," said Susie Burkhart, Shelby County.

"Learning to work with adults has its challenges, but I am anxious to hone my skills to better assist other teachers as they work with students in the area of technology," said Tony Jury of Gallatin County.



Leslie Weihe, Kelly Arnold, Karen Liebert, and Ronda Cox discuss presentation points at the PD Provider Seminar.



Ronda Cox, Lisa Wasson, Sonya Burton, and Leslie Thomas engage their brains through a group activity.



Kathy Wrightson, Traci Georges, Leslie Weihe, and Ruth Ann Sweazy express their creativity in song.

Teachers Trained for Training Teachers! (Continued)

The seminar focus included PD Environments, Types of PD, Content PD, Training Techniques, Process Tools, Precise Directions, and Simulations. OVEC's Linda Allen, Robby Ewing, Michael Franken, and Carol Wright spearheaded the two-day seminar.

The teachers who certified as PD Providers will become part of the OVEC PD Provider Pool. Districts will have access to a short vita on each provider to assist in choosing the best provider to meet specific content area needs. OVEC will send out a list of qualified teachers, as well as cost per school for the PD services.



PD Provider Seminar presenters Robby Ewing, left, and Linda Allen, right, assure Tony Jury, Gallatin County.

Corrective Reading: Closing the Achievement Gap

How can we close the achievement gap in reading that exists between regular and special education students at the middle and high school levels? OVEC's Literacy/Strategies Consultant, Linda Pearce, is assisting districts in investigating various effective, scientifically-based reading programs that address the reading gap. One such program is *Corrective Reading*, a direct instruction approach to reading developed by Science Research Associates (SRA).

Shelby County is one of the OVEC districts that has reviewed the research and chosen *Corrective Reading* as its vehicle to address the reading achievement gap between regular and special education students at the middle and high school levels. OVEC's Linda Pearce and Shelby County's Lisa Herner, Special Education Consultant for Middle and High School, are working together to provide support to teachers in implementing this program.

The *Corrective Reading* program is being implemented in several OVEC districts, and Shelby County's success is just one example of the effectiveness of this reading intervention for special education students.

On August 16th and 17th of this year, 12 Shelby County teachers, 3 district support personnel, and OVEC's Literacy Consultant participated in training conducted by SRA Consultant, Pam Smith. The days were filled with practice of the routines used to teach students using *explicit instruction*. Letter sounds were practiced. Teachers practiced model lessons and learned how to "pace" instruction. Teachers learned the importance of correcting every error, so that the student would hear the appropriate word or sound immediately after making the error.

Research from Bonnie Grossen, Ph.D., from the University of Oregon, stated that "when corrective feedback was provided after every error, the children made significantly fewer errors overall."



The *Corrective Reading* program is helping middle and high school students improve their reading skills.



Strategies used in the *Corrective Reading* program are posted for students' reference.

Corrective Reading (Continued)

How are the lessons organized?

Teachers assist students with two basic steps in reading:

1. Word Attack Skills

- a. Segmenting (Phonemic Awareness)
- b. Blending

2. Reading Decodable Text

- a. Word Reading
- b. Story Reading
- c. Individual Reading Checkouts

1.a. Segmenting (Phonemic Awareness). At the beginning of each lesson, students learn to listen for sounds in words. They learn to segment the sounds of the words.

Here's an example:

Teacher: "Listen: **lip**. Say it." (Signal).

Student: "**Lip**."

Teacher: "My turn to say the first sound in (pause) **lip**: **lll**."

Your turn. Say the first sound." (Signal)

Student: "**lll**."

Students who do not hear the sounds of letters have difficulty associating the correct letter to go with each sound. Students learn to listen to words and sounds and segment the sounds in words. Then they begin to associate specific letters (t, s, m, etc.) with specific sounds. Teachers focus on the most frequent, highly regular letter-sound relationships in *Corrective Reading*.

1.b. Blending. Students then learn to blend sounds. This program believes that students have to be explicitly taught how to blend sounds together; it can't be assumed that they will know how to do it.

The student identifies the component sounds of a word. The teacher models how to sound out the word. The student repeats what has been modeled for him/her. Then the student reads the word independently.



Emily Swindler, teacher at Shelby County West Middle School, reviews the sounds and phonemes at the beginning of the lesson.



Donna Grigsby instructs students in the blending of sounds in a word.

Corrective Reading (Continued)

Emily Swindler, Special Education teacher at Shelby County West Middle School, observes: "My students actually have a strategy to decode unknown words. Before they would just skip over any word they didn't know."

The students are benefiting from the process. "It helps me sound out words," said Bran Stone. Christopher Waters remarked, "It's super fun!" When asked how it has helped him, he replied, "I can learn more!"

2. Reading decodable text. The second part of *Corrective Reading* is reading decodable text based on the phonetic principles that students have practiced. There are no pictures to aid their comprehension. The emphasis here is on application of their phonemic awareness and phonics skills to text that is predictable.

Individual students are given lists of words from the decoding portion of the text and words from the passage (Word Reading). Then students read sections of the passage out loud and are corrected after every error (Story Reading). Once the passage is read as a group, then individuals read with a partner under a timed setting to build speed and fluency (Individual Reading Checkouts).

Two 8th grade students at Shelby County West Middle School, Brenda Delgato and Tara Fogerty, are examples of the success of using this method for teaching reading. Tara and Brenda are in their second year in this program. Tara now reads 129 words in a minute and Brenda reads 140 words in a minute.

Tara is an avid reader and has favorite books. Her favorite is about "Aaliyah," a singer who died when she was only 22 years of age. Tara says she liked this book because "Aaliyah spoke her heart and did her best." Tara could retell the story and remember how the story spoke to her.

Isn't that the true judge of reading improvement—when stories come to life for the reader? Hopefully, there will be other "Taras" who will be awakened to the magic of reading through the introduction of *Corrective Reading*.



Students in Ms. Swindler's class listen to the sounds of the phonemes.



Brenda Delgato and Tara Fogerty, 8th grade students at Shelby County West Middle School, read lists of words prior to the reading of the story.

Corrective Reading (Continued)

We're off to a great start!

All students in resource language arts classes in Shelby County middle and high schools have been tested and placed in their appropriate classes. Teachers are enthusiastic and are beginning to see changes in students' reading behavior.

Lisa Herner, Special Education Consultant for Middle and High School, and Linda Pearce, Strategies/Literacy Consultant in Special Education (OVEC), are working together to give support to the district. SRA will send a Consultant to the school to observe and give feedback to teachers implementing the program.

We'll let you know in the spring about our progress!



Students are making great strides in reading using the *Corrective Reading* program.

Migrant Head Start Makes a Difference!

“Beep Beep!! We’re driving through our second year in Early/Preschool Migrant Head Start.” Edwin and Kimberly are two of the children who are receiving tremendous benefits from the Migrant Head Start program.

The philosophy of the Early and Preschool Migrant Head Start program is to accept children where they are, and to help them develop fully as unique individuals physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially. We also support and uplift the well being of the family, and we provide experiences and enrichment opportunities for all families in our program.

This program, which operates April through December, serves migrant families with children 6 weeks old to school age who meet the qualifications set by federal Head Start guidelines. This program provides comprehensive services such as, but not limited to: dental needs, vision needs, childcare, educational programs, and family support. As a result of regular dental and vision exams, this year alone, one child received over \$2,000 in dental services, and another child received glasses with the assistance of the Migrant Head Start program.

“Ensuring that our Migrant Head Start/Early Head Start children are healthy and ready to learn has been a priority for our staff,” said Charlotte Wenthe, Head Start Health Coordinator. “An example of how we work in partnership with parents and community partners is our obtaining dental services for Migrant Head Start children at discounted rates. One child would only eat ‘soft’ foods and would cry when she brushed her teeth. After her dental work was completed, staff reported that she was a ‘totally different child.’ They observed that her eating habits improved and she smiled more.

“Another example of working through community partnerships,” Wenthe continued, “is when we obtained an eye exam and glasses for a child. The exam and glasses were paid for through a private donation from Spencer Christian Church.”



Edwin and Kimberly enjoy their days at Migrant Head Start.



Kimberly uses the computer in her classroom.



Issiah brushes his teeth to promote dental hygiene.

Migrant Head Start (Continued)

Wente works hard to meet children's health needs. "We believe that health strongly impacts our children and their learning," she said. "Our staff members have made great efforts to meet the health needs of the Migrant Head Start children."

The staff in the Migrant program are bilingual and have recently completed their monolingual Child Development Associate Credential. Dulce Cranmer, Cara Wooden, and Lucia Valdez are to be commended for their dedication and work in receiving this required credential.

Seth Kopald, the Regional Migrant Training and Technical Specialist, recently visited our Migrant Head Start/ Early Head Start Program. In his summary report of the visit, he stated: "The children and families are lucky to have these teachers in their lives." He suggested that teachers in other programs come and observe our program and shadow the experience and knowledge that he observed during his visit.



Dedicated staff in the Migrant Head Start program include Dulce Cranmer, Cara Wooden, and Lucia Valdez.

Key Leadership Topics Addressed at Summer Institute

The theme of this year's OVEC Summer Leadership Institute was "School Culture, Learning Communities and Academic Rigor." One hundred and forty school and district leaders attended the institute held in July at Shelby County West Middle School.

Over the two days of the institute, participants examined "**School and District Culture**" with Dr. Kent Peterson, national presenter and co-author of *Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership*. Peterson spoke of culture as the "key determinant of staff focus, commitment, motivation and productivity."

"Understanding a school culture and knowing how to shape it in positive ways is critical to improving student learning and success," according to Peterson.

During his presentations he focused on the leader's role in reading the culture, assessing the culture and reinforcing or transforming the culture. He spoke of the reflections of the culture expressed in norms, values and beliefs existing in the school, as well as the symbols, stories, rituals, ceremonies and traditions that make up the daily life of the school.

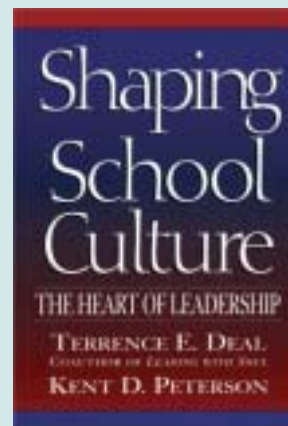
Throughout the session, participants engaged in a variety of activities, including defining the culture they would like to see exist at their school, identifying traditions and ceremonies in their school, and choosing one aspect of their culture they were targeting for improvement during the coming school year.

The second major component of the institute was a look at "**Learning Communities**." Participants explored what they are, how to create them and how they can be used to transform a school to a higher level of performance and serve as an impetus for improving student achievement. Rita Petersen, a retired educator from Jefferson County, presented this session. She is the facilitator of a Leadership Development project in Jefferson County related to forming learning communities.

Participants examined their own experiences as a part of a learning team or community, distinguished between the two and looked at research relating to the importance of learning communities.



National presenter, Dr. Kent Peterson, spoke at the Leadership Institute.



Peterson, co-author of a prominent book on school culture, shared his knowledge and insights during the institute.

Key Leadership Topics (Continued)

In an extended conversation format, Rita explored different tasks that could be given to teams of teachers to begin to shape these teams into learning communities. Examining student work, organizing curriculum content, conducting a book study and developing integrated units of study are several simple ways to get started with shaping your school into a learning community.

Once staff members reach the level of constantly examining their own teaching effectiveness measured by the work and success of their students, they have moved much closer to modeling the best characteristics of a learning community.

Rita emphasized the need to create the structure in a school to allow teachers to have time to work together as a prerequisite to building learning communities. Next, administrators discussed the importance of creating the time for teachers to work together as the most critical element in shaping learning teams and a learning community. Lastly, Rita rounded out the presentation by exploring ways to provide teachers with meaningful expectations regarding how this time is to be used to enhance their teaching skills and the learning of the students.

Dr. Louise Byrd anchored the second day of the institute with her presentation on “**Academic Rigor.**” OVEC leaders defined the concept of rigor in their own terms using words like **challenging, intense, engaging, demanding, difficult, complex, thought-provoking, emotional, content-rich, rewarding, and compelling**, to name just a few. The sense of “high expectations” permeated the entire discussion on this topic.

Participants learned to use the “Rigor-Relevance Framework” from Daggett’s work in this area, which blended Bloom’s Thinking Continuum with an Application or Action Continuum. Administrators analyzed lessons or classroom activities and placed them on the continuum and learned how to move an instructional activity from a lower level of instruction to a high level of rigor and relevance.

Institute attendees shared and discussed nine strategies identified through research as leading to high levels of rigor and relevance. Attendees looked at examples of rigorous lessons and Dr. Byrd provided a CD of these examples to all institute participants.



Key Leadership Topics (Continued)

Finally, Dr. Byrd presented “Principle V: Academic Rigor and a Thinking Curriculum” from the *Pittsburgh Walkthrough* process as a possible tool for schools to use in building a more rigorous academic program. As with other aspects of the walkthrough model, administrators reviewed and discussed key questions to ask students.

Overall, the institute emphasized three of the most important elements in Kentucky’s Standards and Indicators of School Improvement—school culture, learning communities and academic rigor—each of which is seen as a key step in the process of moving schools to proficiency by 2014.



OVEC's GED Testing Soars!

The Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative's GED (General Education Development) testing service has given adult learners in the OVEC region the opportunity to recognize and reach their educational goals and potential.

Since his hire in 2002, GED Examiner Bruce Thomas has made the GED testing schedule accessible to students on a monthly basis. Mr. Thomas provides GED testing opportunities 2 days a month at the OVEC administrative building and 4 days a month at the GED addendum site, Whitney Young Job Corps Center in Simpsonville.

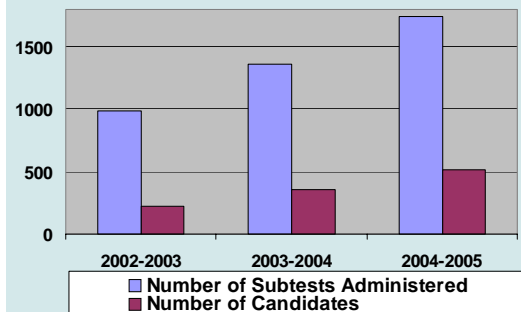
GED tests are administered to any Kentucky resident who meets state designated criteria and has been certified as test ready by a Kentucky Adult Learning Center. Since 2002, GED administration has provided 4,087 subtests in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies to 1,100 adult learners.

As the chart to the right shows, there has been a steady increase each year since 2002 in the number of subtests administered and the number of candidates tested.

To learn more about the process of getting your GED and accessing adult education services in your community, contact your local adult education provider or Kentucky Adult Education at 502-573-5114, or visit www.kyae.ky.gov.



**Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative
2002-2005 GED Administration Totals**



Early Reading First Empowers Children

“Reading is when you sit, look at the book; the words go in your eyes and out your mouth. It’s not throwing up, it’s reading.”

—Definition of reading by a child in Early Reading First

Three- and four-year-olds in Early Reading First classrooms are gaining the pre-literacy skills that will prepare them to read and be successful in school! That’s what Early Reading First is all about.

The OVEC Early Reading First program had a *tremendous* first year of operation in the preschool programs located in Eminence, Henry County and Owen County. The grant enabled OVEC to partner with 12 preschool and local Head Start classrooms in the districts to collaboratively help turn these classrooms into “Classrooms of Academic Excellence.”

This grant has provided monumental support for these preschool programs by extending half-day daily instruction to full-day instruction in Henry County and Eminence. Each district now has a summer preschool program that was very well received by families in each community.

“We’re very excited about this year and about the things our child will be learning,” one preschool student’s mother (and school bus driver) said. “I’ve seen the excitement on the faces of these young kids in preschool and I can tell that great things are happening.”

The Early Reading First grant provides so many resources to make the program successful:

- ongoing and intensive professional development for all preschool and collaborative staff,
- funds for substitutes as needed for staff to attend training,
- additional staff to extend instruction to full day,
- funds to run summer preschool programs,
- research-based curriculum,
- instructional materials,
- technology equipment and software,
- weekly literacy packets for parents,
- a Literacy Consultant,
- Literacy Specialists for each district,



Reading is fun in Early Reading First!



Children enjoy writing in Early Reading First’s print-rich environment.



Dramatic play enhances children’s literacy skills in listening, oral language, and writing.

Early Reading First (Continued)

- a Program Evaluator,
- a Speech Language Pathologist, and
- Home/School Liaisons for each district to support children's learning and to provide a home/school connection to more fully engage parents in the education of their children.

During the first year of the program, the Director, the Professional Development Coordinator, and school district partners worked hard to identify high quality staff and to get the new *Building Language for Literacy* curriculum in place by January, 2005.

The Program Evaluator, Dr. Robert Popp, provided comprehensive support for the program, including teaching staff how to administer and interpret program assessments to support instruction and measure children's academic growth. During the first two months of instruction, teachers and Literacy Specialists in each district completed pre-testing.

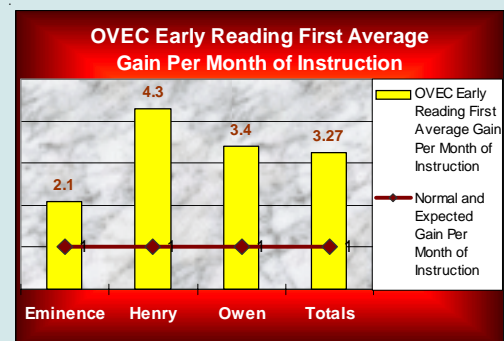
Program data for year one indicates that through enhanced instruction and the utilization of research-based curriculum, the enrolled **children made gains that exceeded all expectations**. The chart at right illustrates the magnitude of the gains. While the normal and expected gain is a one month gain for one month of instruction, the children in the Early Reading First classrooms are making an average gain of 3.27 months per one month of instruction.

One kindergarten teacher expressed her delight with the skills of those children coming into her classroom after being a part of the Early Reading First program. "I can tell the biggest difference in the students who were in the Early Reading First preschool program and those who weren't," she remarked. "The ERF students knew all their alphabet letters and sounds when I tested them at the beginning of the school year!"

"I will take all ERF preschoolers in my K/1 classroom," said Judy Sanders, a Henry County primary teacher. "Their knowledge in oral language, letter recognition, print awareness and phonemic awareness/phonics is exceptional. I've been able to start my year at a higher developmental point. One extra bonus is they can all write their names!"



Laura learns to recognize letters and spell her name.



Children and their parents participate in a preschool parent night.

Early Reading First (Continued)

"Thanks to Early Reading First," said Sharen Hubbard, an ERF Literacy Specialist in Owen County, "our preschool children have the opportunity to excel in their literacy development. I see intentional teaching going on each day, and the gains the children are making are tremendous. I can't wait to see what a difference an entire year of instruction will bring!"

Early Reading First funds help preschool children to develop early literacy skills that prepare them for success in school and in life. The money spent to ensure that these children get off to a good start with their education will likely have far reaching effects—ultimately reducing costs for remedial and special education, criminal justice, and welfare and increasing the potential for higher income earned and taxes paid.

The OVEC Early Reading First staff are proud of first-year accomplishments and at the same time are learning, refining and working hard to ensure continuous program improvement.



Staff for the Early Reading First Program include (top left and clockwise) Sharen Hubbard, Jan Abrams, and Tommie Baxter, Literacy Specialists, and Paige Voorde, Speech Language Pathologist Assistant.