Strategies for Literacy Leadership

Principals' Short Course 2019

Bev Brenna
July 4
A Definition of Literacy

English Language Arts=
Listening, Speaking, Reading,
Writing, Viewing, Representing

But...what does literacy mean to you?
Rainbow Model of Literacy

- Priscilla George, 2002

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening
- Speaking
- Viewing
- Representing +

Creativity
Technology
Confidence
Dreams
Wisdom
Necessary Resources for Reading Instruction

- Educators who understand the reading process + authentic assessment practices
- Interesting, diverse children’s and young-adult texts
- Dedicated, well-used reading time
Strategies for Literacy Leadership

Bev’s Top Ten...
1. Let students teach us about themselves.

- Observe children’s learning and recognize that learning to read (and write) is actually very difficult for many children.

- “Children are wired for sound but print is an optional accessory that must be painstakingly bolted on.”

  --Stephen Pinker
2. Acknowledge that no single program works magically for all children to reach literacy outcomes.

- To achieve fluency, readers need to explore lots of texts in lots of genres and forms

  --Richard Allington
3. Support Language Teaching and Learning Across the Curriculum

The LAC movement (Dartmouth Conference in 1966, England) is still gaining ground, although withered by forces from high-stakes testing that demand immediate, quantifiable results. - May & Wright, 2007
e.g., How do students in your setting make sense of reading levels when using levelled books? Are numbers and letters eroding confidence?

--Schwanenflugel & Flanagan, 2017
5. Promote Meaningful Engagement with Families

Doors Open Classrooms, Mentors and Models, Community Stories as Key Language Texts, etc.

- William Rowluck’s M.Ed. Thesis A Narrative Inquiry into Nlaka’Pamux (Interior Salish) Children’s Responses to Online Digital Curriculum Featuring Nlaka’Pamux Parents and Elders
6. Support Student Connections for Buddy Work

- Lynda Liebrecht’s study of Multi-grade classrooms
- Trained Senior-Student Reading Mentors
- Kenneth Koch’s Cross-Grade Writing and connected studies
7. Facilitate Community-Wide Interactions to Connect Life Goals with Literacy Goals

Why do we communicate? For information...for enjoyment...

- Kelly Gallagher’s work also builds understandings about lifestyle goals, professional dreams, and the cost of living
8. Open Productive Channels to Resource Libraries

- Classroom/School/Division/ Community+
- Access to interesting (Canadian!!) text in multiple genres and forms
- Ask your teachers “What are you reading to students this year?”
- + Consider banks of locally created items
9. Champion Canadian Content

- Canadian Children’s Book News
- CM Magazine (online reviews)
- Locally created magazines and anthologies (classroom; school-level; division level; community)
- Ask ourselves “What are we reading with students this year?”
10. Other
Questions/Comments?
Changing Books for a Changing World

• What changes have we noticed in books for youth?
• What opportunities arise with the appearance of digital technologies?
• What tensions do we have with the evolution of children’s literature?
RICHARD III
GOOD-BYE MARIANNE
BABYMOUSE
THE INVENTION OF HUGO CABRET
New Forms

- Graphic novels
- Verse novels for youth
- Picture books for older readers
- Email novels
- Fan fiction
- Narrative non-fiction books and other new combinations/blends of form and genre
New Formats

- Non-sequential storylines
- Non-Eurocentric story structures
- Unconventional directionality of pages
- New blends of illustration and text, use of fonts and colour
- Digital dimensionality
New Perspectives

- Stories previously untold, voices previously unheard
- Representation as mirrors and windows
- Multiple narrators
Changing Boundaries

- Serious subject matter
- Audiences widening for “children’s literature”
- Unresolved endings
Trends in Numbers of Canadian Picture Book Titles and Prevalence of Indigenous Authors/Illustrators
Author Demographics 2017 PBs

Illustrators
Authors

- Yukon (YT)
- Nunavut (NU)
- Northwest Territories (NT)
- Saskatchewan (SK)
- Quebec (QC)
- Prince Edward Island (PE)
- Ontario (ON)
- Nova Scotia (NS)
- Newfoundland and Labrador (NL)
- New Brunswick (NB)
- Manitoba (MB)
- British Columbia (BC)
- Alberta (AB)
Bev’s Newest Favourite Read Aloud

Erin Bow
(2019)
• Please feel free to check out my research publications at www.beverleybrenna.com under “Archives”
• Contact me anytime at bev.brenna@usask.ca