

the school to improve student results included a chronology of events that went something like this: First of all, a tally of failing students was taken and each was categorized into factors that affected or might have affected test scores. The categories were:

1. ESL students
2. SLD students
3. students taking a subject at the applied rather than at the academic level, (hence an inappropriate level)
4. students with a history of poor achievement whether due to poor behaviour, poor motivation, emotional dysfunction, family difficulties or poor attendance or
5. students taking instruction in French Immersion.

After creating a profile of weak students, the plan was devised for remediation of instructional strategies to address some of the difficulties for these students. Students began to get short assignments for reading and writing in all their core subjects to familiarize them with the format of the test. If students were unable to think, read, and write efficiently then remediation was needed.

But this is only a small part of today's curriculum requirements. As teachers are assigning more technology-based projects, we are seeing (and I speak as a teacher-librarian, information specialist) that students are becoming more proficient in designing newsletters and brochures in Quark, Claris Works and Microsoft Publisher, building web pages and creating PowerPoint presentations. Using the internet as a primary research tool impacts on how much reading students need to do as well, which leads one to wonder if students are reading more or just moving faster through the content. Students can now copy, cut and paste and download skinny versions of books.

This point and click research is not what we would like to promote as an ideal. Rather, there should be an emphasis on reading widely, taking point form notes and scanning for main idea before printing. We should make clear our expectation that good research involves using more than one source of information. Though

projects may look professional, the thinking, reading and writing part of the project still needs to be monitored. For weak students remediation is necessary to emphasize the necessary skills.

Integral components of school-wide literacy success should include an individualized program that uses technology, emphasizes a reading program, provides mentoring of students with specific difficulties, and fosters a school climate and atmosphere for support of the program. Additionally recommended is an area for school literacy materials housed in the library, communication with broader discussion groups, teacher training and classroom support. For new ideas in education Educational Leadership and Access should be ordered and actively promoted. Sometimes dropping off a relevant article into a mailbox helps to circulate the item.

We need an individualized remediation program with three main components: people, technology and books. We need caring, committed and knowledgeable mentors who can sit with a poor reader on a regular basis and offer encouragement when a weak learner just hasn't the patience to stick with the work. A good reading teacher specialist as a resource person would be excellent.

For individual instruction and feedback there are some fabulous computer programs that can complement class instruction. A few which are used at our school are *The Reading Academy*, and *Inspiration*. Also of note are *Click2Learn Assistant*, *Toolbook* for online projects and *Accelerated Reader* for reading evaluation. Finally, good quality reading material, which is well chosen and appropriate to motivate and inspire reading, is a must.

In essence, students entering grade ten this past September will be aware of higher expectations and will have to demonstrate their ability to perform literacy tasks.

We all have a stake in this process and need to use the results to reflect on the efficacy of our teaching practices, hone our skills as professionals and take actions that are appropriate to make results.

I look forward to the challenge! ■

President's comment:

The second OLA Leadership Forum.

In April, the Ontario Library Association will present a meeting to address the changing role of school libraries in an evolving education system.

As in this article, the emphasis will be placed on the role of all players from teachers to principals to parents to library staff in creating the information literate student in the years ahead.