



The Jewish Education Center Of Cleveland's Óã -- a newsletter for educators

Vol. VI No. 7

January 14, 2000

ñ"ùú èáù æ

Literacy in the Jewish Classroom

Throughout our schools, teachers are concerned about issues of literacy. It is our goal to promote the growth of skills that will enable students to extract meaning from text and to express themselves in a way that is understood by others. This impacts on students in different ways: literacy empowers our students to find information they need, to enjoy literature, to deal with traditional texts, and to learn a new language.

This óã focuses on issues of emergent literacy, or developing early skills in the area of reading and writing. This is a primary concern to teachers of both Hebrew and English. The Shared Reading approach and the use of big books is one way to promote early literacy. A JESP class on creating and using big books in the classroom will begin on January 25, 2000 and will meet for four sessions. Continuing education credit is available along with a stipend for completing the course. – Marci Rogozen, Teacher Center Co-Director

Think Big: Creating Big Books with Children, by Cynthia L. Johnson (Bothell, WA: The Wright Group, 1998).

Just as more and more of our teachers have been seeking advice on how to use big books in the classroom, a book comes along that serves as a simple guide. Think Big provides a basic introduction of how and why big books are used in the classroom. However, the main focus of the book is on how the teacher and students can make their own big books: it covers materials, art techniques, storage, and information on how to manage the project from beginning to end. The colorful photos will inspire many ideas! This book is valuable in helping to create big books, in both Hebrew and English.

*-- Reviewed by Marci Rogozen,
Teacher Center Co-Director*



Shared Reading

Video distributed by The Wright Group, 1993. (20 minutes in color).

Shared reading is an interactive reading experience that involves a whole class of emergent readers. The video begins with the teacher reading a Big Book to her students and discussing it with them. It details the day-to-day process of engaging the students in various aspects of literacy: story comprehension, word recognition, punctuation and interaction. Shared reading enables the students to develop and reinforce phonological awareness, to expand oral language skills and vocabulary. The video gives good suggestions for follow-up activities.

*-- Reviewed by Bonnie Shapiro,
Ratner Media & Technology Center Administrative Assistant*

Worth Mentioning: The Association For Supervision and Curriculum Development's journal, Educational Leadership, devoted its October 1999 issues to "Redefining Literacy" (Vol. 57, No. 2).

One way to focus on issues of written literacy is through the actual writings of other children. Consider using any of the following books:

- **Faxes to God: Real-Life Prayers Transmitted to the Heavens,**
Joyce Shira Starr, editor (NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995). For grades 5-Adult.

- **I Never Saw Another Butterfly:
Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezin
Concentration Camp, 1942-1944,**
Hana Volavdova, editor (NY: Schocken Books, 1993).
For grades 6-Adult.



- **We are Children Just the Same: Vedem, the Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezin,**
Marie Rut Krizkova, Kurt Jiri Kotouc and Zdenek Ornest,
editors (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1995).
For grades 7-10.



- **Dear Hope . . . Love Grandma: A Real Correspondence Between an 8-Year-Old and Her Grandmother,** by Hilda Abramson Hurwitz and Hope R. Wasburn, Mara Wasburn, editor
(Los Angeles, CA: Alef Design Group, 1993). For grades 4-6.

- **If You Could Be My Friend:
Letters of Mervet Akram Sha'ban and Galit Fink,**
presented by Litsa Boudalika
(New York: Orchard Books, 1992). For grades 6-8.

For Hebrew Teachers:

Both the Ratner Media & Technology Center and The Teacher Center have a collection of children's books in Hebrew. The former contains materials from Israel, including picture books, children's stories and some teen fiction. The Teacher Center has Hebrew Big Books, which you may duplicate for your own classroom. Feel free to browse our collection.

Web Sites

With the recent explosion of on-line information, students need to expand their literacy repertoire to make sense of the photographs, images, graphics, texts, hyperlinks, and sounds that will make up the literature of the future. Devoting time to improving our students' digital literacy will make them become more critical consumers of this new type of information.

Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators has a variety of links to help guide teachers and students in the complex task of evaluating and producing electronic literature.

Visit her website at: <http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/eval.html>.

-- by Maury Greenberg,
Director Of Technology Resources