

JMP Parent Literacy Night
November 12, 2008

Over the course of the last several weeks, a committee of teachers at James Madison Primary School gathered to plan the first of two Parent Literacy Nights for the 2008-2009 school year. Dialogue ensued concerning planning options, logistical considerations, scheduling, and clerical necessities. When all was said and much was done, we set out on our mission to present parents with tools that would enable them to become the company their child needs in order to think along side a book.

A read aloud was videotaped in three different classrooms representing each of the grade levels; kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. It provided a visual context with which to demonstrate the power of thinking before, during, and after reading. In addition to the comprehension strategies of activating schema, prediction, making connections, envisioning, inferring, and synthesizing, we demonstrated reading behaviors and reading habits that parents sometimes overlook. For example, each read aloud began with a demonstration of what it means *to get your mind ready to read*. Parents witnessed first hand the importance of settling into a *just right spot*, the power of active listening, and value of encouraging one's child to *click on the camera in his head* in anticipation of reading. Each read aloud concluded with a demonstration of the importance of *lingering* beyond the text and synthesizing the thinking.

The presentations were differentiated based on each teacher's teaching style. Some teachers presented the videotape in its entirety, pausing at crucial points for elaboration and discussion. Other teachers presented snippets of the videotape, followed by discussion. In several classes, parents participated in an abbreviated read aloud and were offered guided practice in using the comprehension strategies. Everywhere, there was evidence of children's thinking!

The evening was a compelling reminder of the sophisticated thinking that occurs when a little one has an adult to read aloud to him every day. Approximately 200 parents witnessed little ones, in many cases, their little ones, engaged in thinking along side a book. It was a powerful visual of the important role a parent plays in their child's literacy development.

Committee Members:

Kindergarten

Jeri Deakyne(LET)*
Ella Filson
Shari Oxfeld
Susan Riolo (CRT)
Merril Yurch

Grade 1

Christine Brower (Co-Chair)
Kathi Edwards
Erin Fetter (LDT)
Jill Gumienny (Co-Chair)
Carole Kunz

Grade 2

Janis Duer
Lindsay James
Debbie Porcelli
Carrie Rinaldi

*Photographer

Principal: Gina Foxx

Facilities Manager: Chris Kopac (A special thank you for your technical expertise!!)

JMP Parent Literacy Night was funded by PRIDE. Parents received a packet containing materials to support their efforts in reading aloud at home.