


## Supporting Enhanced Literacy and Numeracy



Strategies for secondary School teachers

A workshop presented by Narissa Phelps

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## On The Wall

A PEEL (Project for Enhancing Effective Learning) teaching strategy that allows for sharing of ideas or information


On your pink card write the ONE literacy or numeracy teaching / extension / remediation strategy that you think has had the greatest success.

You may include a brief statement as to why it was so successful (2 minutes)

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## My card

### Literacy Numeracy Camp



ELLA and SNAP results are analysed and a group of 10 students chosen to go on two day camps (one literacy, one numeracy) to the beach to work on basic remediation strategies eg: punctuation > sentence writing > paragraph writing > work published

This sort of camp is usually run for students who are strong in a skill, for example a Writers' Camp. To send students who are weak in a skill is of huge advantage in that it:


- Removes them from what is often a negative learning environment into an exciting one
- The whole learning experience is positive and therefore conducive to gain
- The whole "camp" thing enables intensive skilling. The "expamation mark" story

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**Warning!** This presentation contains no instant fix.. nothing **NEW**

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The problems secondary teachers and assistants have in dealing with poor or low literacy skills



- We are often not trained or experienced with explicit teaching of literacy or basic numeracy skills
- The time factor
- Low literacy / numeracy tangled with emotional, social, motivational problems – a minefield

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The material out there is ..... Well let's face it.. hard to come by (\$) and not always inspiring!

I would propose the following:


- If we keep trying the same thing that hasn't worked in the past, why would it work in the future?
- To achieve improvement the student needs to want to improve or at least enjoy what they are doing
- Improving or enhancing literacy / numeracy in secondary students is difficult

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Let's consider the following

We hate what we are not good at.  
We don't want to spend extra time doing the things we are not good at.  
If we have had negative experiences of reading or maths we are not going to enjoy them.

SO.....



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I propose that....


Our remediation programmes will only be effective if students **want** to do them.

- Option 1:  
The Literacy Numeracy Camp Idea

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I propose that....

Our remediation programmes will only be effective if students **want** to do them.




- Option 2:  
The reading with pleasure and interest option

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Empower the reader


The reader's Bill of Rights  
(Pennac, Daniel. *Better Than Life*, Coach House Press, 1996)

- The right to NOT read
- The right to skip pages
- The right not to finish
- The right to reread
- The right to read anything
- The right to escapism
- The right to read anywhere
- The right to browse
- The right to read aloud
- The right not to defend you tastes



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The secret is emersion...



....in reading material that the student wants to read

Break the pattern that they have experienced in the past – the secret HAS TO BE **interest and passion**

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### What does the research say?

- ABS 1999 survey – 45% of Australians have poor literacy skills = difficulty engaging in everyday reading  
(ABS 1999, "Australians' Literacy Skills: How do they rate internationally", year Book Australia 1999)
- The key to developing literacy comes from education from an early age
- Secondary schools are still in the early phases of developing successful programmes in enhancing literacy (Department of Education and Employment 1998. Review of secondary Education 1993-97)
- There is no "quick fix" solution for deficiencies in literacy

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- Many students believe that what they learn at school has little relevance to them now or in their future
- Student believe that what they know or are able to do is not valued by the teacher
- Students therefore do not bother to use their literacy skills in a knowledge enhancing way  
(Munro, John. 2004. Improving literacy in the secondary school: An information to knowledge innovation. University of Melbourne)
- Successful strategies for improving literacy include:
  - \* a personal touch pays off
  - \* literacy across the curriculum – consistency
  - \* one size does not fit all (the phonics debate comes in here) (Successful strategies for improving literacy. Education Quality and Accountability Office, Ontario 2004.)

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(Meier, Joanne. 2005. Seeking help for a struggling reader: 7 steps for teachers.)


- Secondary teachers and assistants should be requesting specific professional development should they need to specifically teach reading – reflect on your own research-based teaching
- Get to know the student
- Get to know the family
- Encourage good literacy habits at home (bearing in mind that this is not always achievable)
- Tap into the specialists and resources in your school and area
- Advocate for the student
- Stay informed

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### One of the key factors found to influence success in enhanced literacy

Be courageous in differentiating.  
Adjust:

- Content
- Process
- Product eg: oral, artistic, dramatic, multimedia, written
- resources as appropriate



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Howard Gardiner, cited in Siegel & Shaughnessy, 1994, p563.

*"There is no one best way to educate all children. Indeed, the biggest mistake of past centuries has been to treat all children as if they were variants of the same individual and thus to feel justified in teaching them the same subjects in the same ways."*

*DIFFERENTIATE – this is the true secret to success*

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*"Curricular adaptations allow a learner to use her current skill repertoire and participate, at least partially, in a general education instructional activity, while promoting the acquisition of new skills"*

*"While we are in the same room we are NOT in the same place"*

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The golden rules for supporting enhanced literacy and numeracy **in the class room** are:

- Identify purpose & relevance so a student knows why it is important
- Activate previous knowledge
- Always employ student-centred learning techniques – hands-on for improved emersion and retention
- Enhance self-esteem at all times

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The advantages of student-centred learning

- Cognitive skills are developed
- Students take increased responsibility for their own learning
- Students are actively involved in their learning rather than being passive empty vessels

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## PEEL – one example of student-centred strategies which focus on literacy

**Graffiti Sheets:**  
A way of gathering students' ideas But students are reading & reacting as they add their own

**Method:**

- Each group get a sheet and puts down their ideas on an issue on the sheet
- The sheets are then attached to the wall
- Other group then walk around with the aim being to add as much as they can to the existing information on the sheet
- To do this students read, analyse and then write

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## Write on the Reading

- Addresses the problem of superficial reading and lack of engagement

**Method:**

- Students are given a piece of writing (it has to be in a form where they can actually write on and around the text)
- As they read they respond in any manner that is appropriate eg: *I don't understand this; what does this word mean, I agree with this ; why did they behave like this? Etc..*
- The student can then discuss their responses with the teacher

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## Now do a Write on the Reading

The article

*Increasing Reading Achievement: What does It Take? By Linda Cornwell*

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## Jumbled notes

- A great way to have the student focus on the content and the sequence of information

**Method:**

- The student is given a piece of text that has been cut into pieces
- The student or the group has to decide on the order that the text has to be placed in so that it makes sense
- Obviously in doing this the student has to make sense of the text and understand it yet they have done so in a fun way

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## What I have learnt

- This strategy improves a students reading
- **Method:**
- Before you begin you give the student the topic eg: Holden cars if they are reading from an Auto magazine
- The student is given a sheet with three headings
  - What I know
  - What I have learnt from the first reading
  - What I have learnt from the second reading
- On a sheet they are asked to write down what they already know about the topic. Under the first heading it is fine if they write "nothing"
- They read the article, turn it over and, without looking write what they now know under the second heading
- They repeat this process after the second reading

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## Just to recap – for remediation

- Enjoyment and active involvement are the keys to success
- Devise hands-on literacy and numeracy experiences that enthuse the student
- Break away from the patterns that the student has been involved with in the past....they haven't necessarily worked
- In Secondary Schools IT should be harnessed for emersion

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## Skillswise at

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise>

A great interactive site which is fantastic **for remediation** and fun:

- Words & Numbers
- Words for example: Grammar, Spelling, Reading, Writing, Listening, Vocab.

Fact sheets  
Game  
Quiz  
Worksheets



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## For skill extension...

The main keys here are:

- Active differentiation of content, process and product

**See material on the KAPLAN model of curriculum development**

- The key to success here is still the same
  - a. passion
  - b. emersion
  - c. Student centred

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Finally.....

Share the group's wisdom.

Access what works from the *On The Wall* activity

Thank you for your participation.

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