



Highlights

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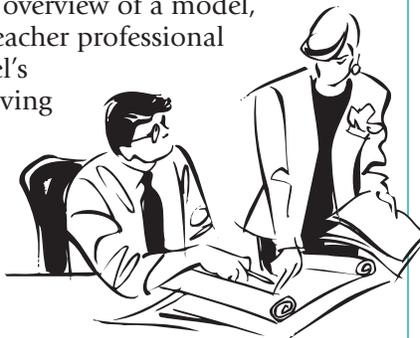
EXTENDED TIME SCHOOLS

Linking Educational Research and Practice

Meaningful Research and Learning Benefits from CELA

The 4th grade and middle school are a focus here, but research and learning profits accrue for all of us in this spring's timely and applicable issue of *English Update*. The National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement (CELA) reports meaningfully about practices that most benefit students. There are many dividends to be discovered like those in the Further Reading (additional available CELA publications) and References sections.

Also enriching is the overview of a model, "the formation of the teacher professional community." The model's stages—beginning, evolving and mature—are charted and elaborated with behavior and interaction markers. This is excerpted from a col-
continued on page 8



SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS IN THE NEWS DEVELOPING LITERACY

Establishing Critical Analysis and Evaluation at PS/MS 3X

The halls of PS/MS 3, in the Bronx, bring learning alive, displaying standards-based projects that reflect the school's respect for learning. In this learning community, with students' best interests at its center, teachers and staff meet to plan and reflect on
continued on page 3



ETS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THIS ISSUE

SPOTLIGHT ON DEVELOPING LITERACY

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THE Professional's Resource

Online Information

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UFT TEACHER CENTER PUBLICATIONS ONLINE

Go to: www.ufttc.org and click on publications. Publications can be read online or downloaded by article, topic or section. Publications available as of May 2001:

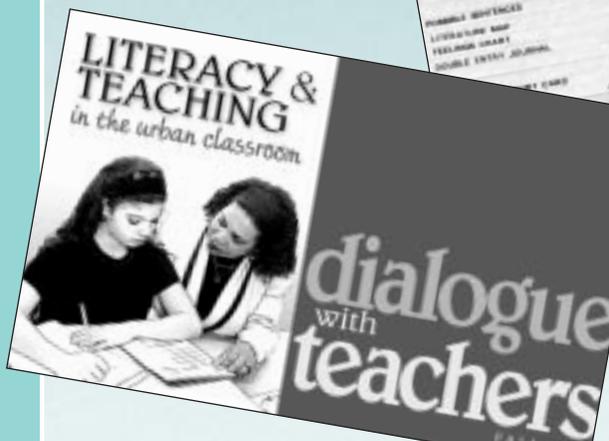
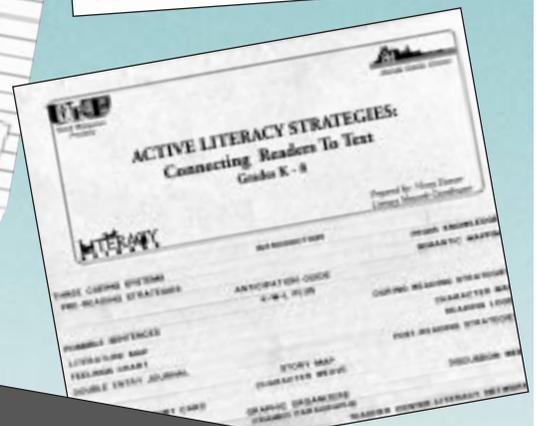
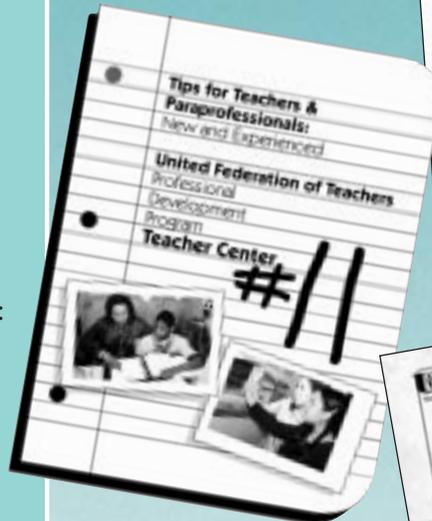
Special Edition, UFT Teacher Center magazine, theme based, (annual).

TIPS for Teachers and Paraprofessionals (New and Experienced), (annual).

Dialogue with Teachers I, Literacy and Teaching in the Urban Classroom, (single issue).

UFT Teacher Center Highlights Extended Time Schools (ETS), newsletter, (4 per year).

Active Literacy Strategies: Connecting Readers to Text Grades K-8, Flipbook, (single issue).



Contributors to **Highlights** June, 2001 **Spotlight on Developing Literacy, Schools in the News:** Velma Gunn, PS/MS 3X, Ruth Schroeder, PS 64M, Joy Rosen, PS 91X, Irene Rabinowitz, PS/MS 212X, Dr. Hal Lanse, IS 246K.



Photographer: Velma Gunn

SPOTLIGHT: PS/MS 3X *continued from page 1*
 their practice. Here, effective standards-based work develops from teaching and learning strategies and skills that are deliberately planned and embedded in the schedule.

During this year, an interdisciplinary literacy approach has joined English language arts and social studies standards for students in K-8th grades. Draped with evidence of students' work, the walls of classrooms and halls offer pervasive evidence of the school's journey towards Critical Analysis and Evaluation, New York State English Language Arts Standard 3.

One staff member shares. "We are proud of our removal from the Schools under Registration Review (SURR) list and are all working hard toward our goal: increased student performance."



DESIGN AND PLANNING

The staff focused its instructional planning by using the District 85-design model and set a goal of helping students meet Standard 3. Staff development inside and outside of the class-

room zoomed in to create the necessary in-depth understanding of what students would need to know and do and the pedagogical strategies and skills that the staff would therefore need.

The plan of action, created by teachers and support staff teams, resulted in a *Critical Analysis and Evaluation Checklist* whose purpose was identification of key components of final projects. These were:

- State the issue/opinion.
- Show evidence of knowledge of the content area selected.
- Give different perspectives/points of view.
- Establish a point of view.
- Critique, giving details and examples.

Teachers used the components as they developed class project outlines and created student-friendly checklists and rubrics.

CLASS PROJECTS

Every classroom completed a project. Touring the halls during the school's Literacy Celebration, students

could take notes on each other's projects, able to identify the similarities and differences across the grades.

What projects did they complete? Students in:

- Kindergarten made environmental Venn diagrams before writing about saving the environment.
- 1st grade looked deeply at families in Japan and the United States.
- 2nd grade compared country and city living.
- 3rd grade compared and contrasted Cuba and the United States.
- One 4th-grade class studied the Native American experience like lawyers who study both sides of the case in preparing a brief and wrote from both sides of an issue before establishing their own point of view.
- Another 4th-grade class studied primary documents as they explored the topic of immigration.
- 5th grade analyzed government, specifically the Constitution of the United States.
- 6th grade explored medieval times.
- 7th grade wrote its own constitution.
- 8th grade wrote about educational issues.

UP CLOSE: THE IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCE

That making relevant connections to family is an essential element of experience in a positive school community is illustrated well by one student in Ms.

PS/MS 3X continued on next page

NEW YORK STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: STANDARD 3

Students will read, write, listen and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

As listeners and readers, students will analyze experiences, ideas, information and issues presented by others using a variety of established criteria. As speakers and writers, they will present, in oral and written language and from a variety of perspectives, their opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information and issues.

Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Revised Edition, (March 1996). (p. 1). (www.nysed.gov).

PS 64M: Building A Foundation for Literacy

The intense focus on literacy at PS 64M, in Manhattan's East Village, has resulted in such an increase in student performance that, for the first time in six years, it is off the Schools Under Registration Review (SURR) list.

The change is reflected in students' movement—to more advanced Success for All (SFA) reading groups. In the fall of 1999, there were 11 groups of 1st-graders in the SFA beginning "Roots." Now there are only three. Then, there was only one group of 6th- and 7th-grade students in the higher-level SFA "Wings." Now all but three classes in the school are in "Wings" groups. (five of the 18 higher-level groups are composed of 6th- and 7th-grade students.) Many of last year's 1st-grade students, currently finishing 2nd grade, have already moved to 3rd-grade SFA groups.

Many upper-grades' students, who started in SFA "Older Roots" groups in September 1999, are today reading such challenging novels as *The Gift Giver* and *My Side of the Mountain*. One 6th-grade student reading *Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry*, wrote about (the character) Cassie's confrontation with prejudice:

Cassie thought that day was the cruelest day of her life because Lillian Jean bumped into Cassie and Big Mama made Cassie say sorry for something she didn't do. Cassie thought that it was cruel because black people should not be treated differently because of their color and Cassie was treated differently.

A LISTENING AND SPEAKING FOUNDATION

Reading aloud by teachers and the students' engagement in thoughtful conversations take place throughout the day. Teachers build initial contexts and out of the emerging lively conversations children develop their voices, articulating their ideas. Take, for example, what happens after kindergarten students hear their teacher read Mercer Mayer's book, *Who Will Be My Friend?* The text and pictures connect closely to their lives. A rush of dialogue is released as they make many text-to-self connections while participating in the Think-Pair and Share activity that follows.

When children express themselves and listen to each other, *Accountable Talk* (University of Pittsburgh, 1999) is modeled and strongly supported. Children

learn to expand on one another's thinking and clarify their ideas using prompts such as:

- I have a question for ____ about that idea.
- I have something to add (or say).
- I have another opinion.
- I agree/disagree with ____ because.
- Can you please explain that?

Often, the prompts are written on bubble shapes, laminated and then posted at the meeting area so that students can use them in their interactions. Meaningful conversations also occur as students confront characters, situations and content-area material such as issues in social studies. This development-of-language-through-conversation forms an important part of students' literacy foundation, allowing connections with the concepts that they encounter during independent reading and writing.

A READING, WRITING, THINKING FOUNDATION

SFA provides structured opportunities in activities such as Treasure Hunts and Adventures in Writing for students to strengthen their reading comprehension and writing skills (as do content area studies, research and report writing). The second literacy-block's activities are designed to further stretch in-depth discussion, increase comprehension and foster critical-thinking skill.

Students' opportunities for extended writing include memoirs, persuasive essays and how-to writing, poetry and fiction. Currently, the 3rd-graders are writing stories set in the Arctic (they are studying the Inuit culture). During the second literacy block, 6th-grade students (as a result of their social studies about Greece and Greek myth) are writing their own myths.

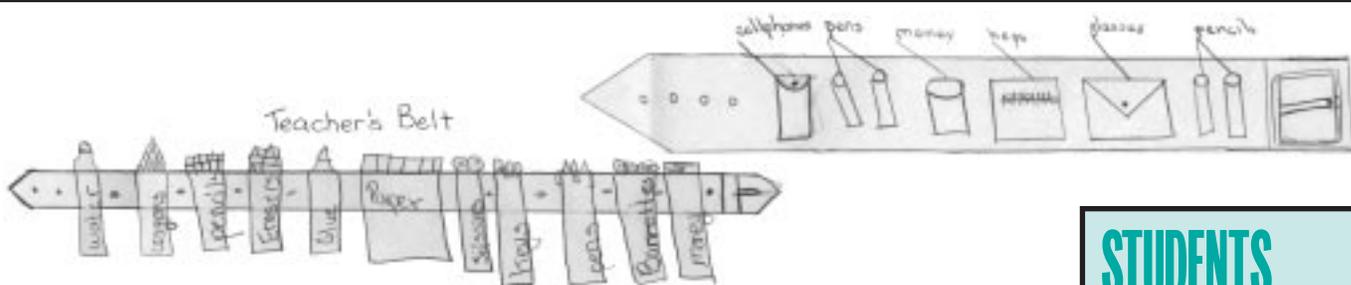
Language, its development the foundation upon which children's reading and writing can flourish, continues to be the major focus for literacy initiatives at PS 64M. It is to cultivate and encourage language development and to empower students that myriad listening, speaking, reading and writing activities are planned closely and embedded carefully in a variety of structures—class meetings, Success for All (SFA), content area studies and the second literacy block.

Reference: Institute for Learning. (1999). *Principles of Learning*. Printed with permission in *Special Edition, 11*, centerfold. New York: UFT Teacher Center.

SPOTLIGHT: PS/MS 3X *continued from page 3*

Evelyn Tirado's class (studying immigration). He became deeply involved and reflected: "I enjoyed hearing about the immigrant experience. During my research about immigration I began to ask my parents questions about where I came from. I discovered [that] my parents shared the immigrant experience. My

mother showed me her passport. When I saw it I was astonished, seeing a photo that proves she is a United States citizen. My father is from Haiti and he survived in Europe for two years with a small amount of food. Without him, his brother, sister and mother would not be here in the land of opportunity."



Literacy: in the Bag at PS 91X

When they learned early in April at PS 91X that Lewis Frankfort, the chief executive officer (C.E.O.) of Coach™, would be their “principal for a day,” the professional development team integrated the preparation for his visit and the visit itself into the school’s literacy instruction.

The preparations were varied:

- Teachers worked with students in grades 2-5 on a K-W-L (Know-Want to Know-Learned) organizer that included what they wanted to learn about Mr. Frankfort and the products manufactured by his company.
- Students used the Internet to find research about the company and created a bulletin-board display.
- Students developed original designs (and accompanying written descriptions) for possible future products. Two students’ designs for a teacher’s belt (which would hold all the “essentials” for the classroom teacher) included spaces for chalk, pens, pencils, a hall pass, and even a cell phone—for calling parents, (see illustrations).
- Students conducted a survey about the company’s products, graphing and interpreting their data and displaying their results.
- Students in 5th grade used a software program to create and display (around a photograph of the principal for a day imported from a picture file) a graphic organizer. The interview question-categories that they had developed were included. They enlarged this display to poster size for a bulletin board at the main entrance.

To their surprise, while conducting the interview of Mr. Frankfort, students learned that he was a former student of PS 91. “I enjoyed sharing my memoir with Mr. Frankfort and I liked hearing his memories of PS 91,” said Mithi Hossain (2nd grade). Ronie Rivas, a 5th-grade student, said, “Mr. Frankfort was really nice. I liked talking to him. He made me feel better about school and I know I can succeed. [I] thank him

for making me feel this way.” “Mr. Frankfort made me feel that I should not give up and I should be brave and pursue my dreams,” said classmate Noelli Mejia.

Doreen Jacobs, SFA facilitator, commented, “It was a great experience for all the children to see someone, who once lived and grew up in our neighborhood, become successful. Mr. Frankfort was sincere, honest and believable in answering all their questions. He certainly left a positive impression on all.”

“Mr. Frankfort was a cool guy,” said Julian Reynoso, (2nd grade). “He was smart and friendly. It was special that he really went to this school,” he added.

Tracey Douglas, a 5th-grade teacher, said, “I was awestruck at how approachable and personable Mr. Frankfort was. He was so honest and great with the kids.”

Mr. Frankfort praised the children for their hard work and was so impressed with the students’ designs and their questions, he requested the bulletin board display be sent to his office. Instead of being just a visitor who toured the building, this principal for a day became a vital component of the literacy experience at the school.

STUDENTS ASK... QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPAL FOR A DAY

A sample of the questions formulated by 5th-grade students at PS 91X:

- ★ Why did the company choose you to be C.E.O.?
- ★ What does a C.E.O. do?
- ★ What other jobs have you had?
- ★ What is your educational background?
- ★ What is a typical day like for you?
- ★ How did the name “Coach” come about? What are future plans for the company?
- ★ Some of our students came up with ideas for new products. Where do you get your designs and what is the process for submitting new ideas or designs?

Literacy by Design at PS/MS 212X

Ruben Diaz, a first-year teacher and fellow at PS/MS 212X, is also a former comic-book editor. Applying his graphic and design skills to new purpose, he has created a workbook for middle-school students in his Success for All (SFA) “Wings” group. It is for use with the SFA reading program’s activities. Earlier this year, Mr. Diaz had designed SFA lesson-plan forms that he shared with colleagues. “Then I needed a companion piece for students that was also visually interesting,” Diaz noted.

At first glance the workbook cover, that invites students to tackle the activities inside, resembles a comic book. Large and bold illustrations (free clip art gathered off the Internet) fill its pages and cartoon-style headings display the elaborately designed SFA activities. Bold display fonts keep readers’ attention. Even garden-variety graphic organizers transform themselves into thought bubbles, mazes, maps and other designs.

Key program components are addressed, focusing students on the activities and encouraging them to add the missing pieces—their own knowledge and understanding. “Students are more likely to keep a collection of these packets to commemorate their learning,” says Mr. Diaz. Not surprisingly students in Mr. Diaz’s class give their new workbook raves: “I think they are cool because the pictures and [the] things they say make me think more and more about what I should write,” one 7th-grade student said. Added a 6th-grade student, “I like it very much so I hope other kids can use it for a day and see what things in there help them the most.”

Shakespeare Makes Standards News at IS 246K

At Walt Whitman Middle School (IS 246 in Brooklyn), where students’ response to literature is as creative as their teachers’ response to New York City Performance Standard E2b (see text box below), literacy instruction is engaging and serious.

For their response to *Romeo and Juliet*, Ms. Sayeeda Carter asked 7th-grade students to follow contemporary newspaper-style formats and create Shakespearean tabloids. Students in her class therefore studied the conventions of both Elizabethan drama and contemporary media. They used the play as a basis for their responses—writing newspaper

sections (including headlines), horoscopes, editorials and even an agony column. Multidimensional learning resulted during this assignment as students created a context and developed reader interest.

Because of the supportive, collegial atmosphere at Whitman, when Ms. Carter shared her successful idea with others, Mr. Shawn Lee—a teaching fellow, got into the act as well. He used the same type of project with his 7th-grade students. Thanks to Carter and Lee, it can certainly be said of the two classes, that, “These are two houses both alike in dignity.”

NEW YORK CITY PERFORMANCE STANDARD E2B

The student produces a response to literature that engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest, [from p. 222, Board of Education of the City of New York. (1997). *New Standards™ Performance Standards* (1st New York City ed.). New York: Board of Education of the City of New York.]



FOR YOU FROM TEACHER CENTER

UFT Teacher Center: Just A Click Away

Where is it cool on a warm summer's day? The UFT Teacher Center Web site (www.ufttc.org) is very cool and just a click away from—wherever you will be. With useful information, current research, networking possibilities and instructional tools, the chances to grow professionally are exponential!

What can you find at www.ufttc.org? Here is a partial list:

- Curriculum Resources and Lesson Plans
- Conferences
- College and University Courses
- Links to Other Learning Sites
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- Publications (See "The Professional's Resource" in this issue.)
- Educational Research/Search Engines
- Streaming Video
- Teacher Center Sites Near You
- And More ...

All school-based Teacher Center sites have open access during after-school hours, with events throughout the school year. Even if you don't yet

have a Teacher Center in your school, there is one near you in your district. Check out locations—school names, addresses and telephone numbers of Teacher Center sites near you online, and plan on an early fall visit, in person, to network, take a workshop and find helpful materials.



**AT A
SCHOOL-
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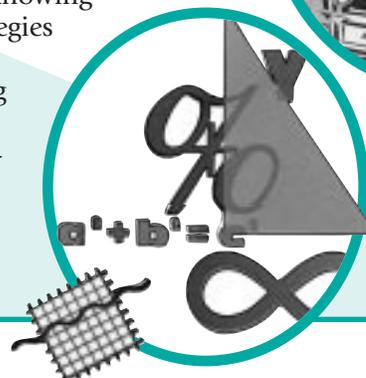
- ✓ Plan standards-based instruction, lessons, units and projects.
- ✓ Use multi-media equipment to prepare for interdisciplinary teaching.
- ✓ Design a mini-grant proposal to fund an action-research project.
- ✓ Problem-solve classroom management situations.
- ✓ Learn about assessment in standards-based work.
- ✓ Participate in peer support groups for new teachers.
- ✓ Use computers and research on-line.
- ✓ Review and borrow professional materials and resources.
- ✓ Join a study group to practice and refine new strategies.
- ✓ Consult with colleagues about day-to-day work.

UFT Teacher Center Summer Seminars for K-8 Teachers

Teacher Center, in collaboration with the New York State Education Department, offers two exciting summer institutes for K-12 educators: *English Language Arts: Creating the Resources* and *Thinking Mathematics*. Eight sessions each, the institutes will be held at the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan. Institutes will run concurrently July 9th through July 19th (Mondays through Thursdays), from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The *English Language Arts Institute* course of study will include standards, lesson structure, Learning Experiences (units of study), understanding literacy, and assessment. *Thinking Mathematics* will include real world activities that make math skills meaningful, the difference between knowing an answer and understanding a concept, collaborative strategies that work best in mathematics and hands-on activities.

Participants will be served a light breakfast each morning and can receive either new teacher professional development hours or "P" credit which can be used toward the second salary differential (30 above the master's). Participants are expected to attend all sessions of an institute. Visit your Teacher Center for a flyer and coupon.



LINKING *continued from page 1*

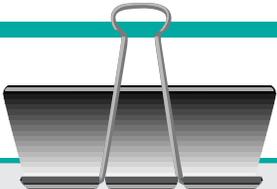
laborative study (by CELA researchers and the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy at the University of Washington) titled *What Makes Teacher Community Different from a Gathering of Teachers?*

The two extended sections of *English Update* that are reviewed below yield details about classrooms where students perform and achieve at high levels.

EFFECTIVE FOURTH-GRADE TEACHERS AND THEIR CLASSROOMS

In this section we learn that CELA researchers, Richard Allington and Peter Johnston, gathered data in 30 classrooms, 24 schools, and five states across a variety of rural, suburban, and small- and large city environments. Their question was: "What overall conception of literacy teaching and learning guides the practice of effective teachers?"

In summary, findings that emerged included the high importance of particular kinds of talk (students in effective classrooms talk more and more purposefully) and curriculum and materials (varied, engaging and multisourced) in these classrooms. How instruction is organized (around students' interests) and evaluation is conducted (based more on improvement, progress and effort than standardized testing methods) were other key features. The researchers found "substantial convergence between previous



EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION FOR STRUGGLING READERS

With the same basis as effective curriculum and instruction for all students, as identified by CELA researchers and others, effective instruction:

- ✓ Uses diversity to enhance learning.
- ✓ Increases the cohesiveness of curriculum and instruction.
- ✓ Raises the level of student engagement in higher order talk and writing.
- ✓ Aligns curriculum with assessment.
- ✓ Scaffolds student performance of new and difficult tasks.

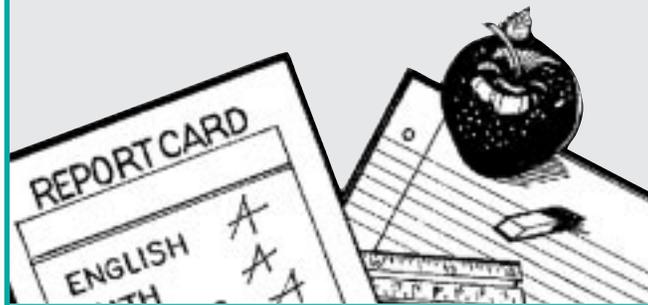
Adapted and reprinted from *English Update*. (2001, spring issue), p. 2.

References

- National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement (CELA). (2001, Spring). *English Update*. Albany, NY: CELA, (<http://cela.albany.edu>).

Further Reading

- CELA Online: Tools for Schools. *Highlights*, 4 (2000, June), 1, 6-7. New York: UFT Teacher Center, (www.ufttc.org).



studies of effective upper elementary school instruction" and their own research. The entire report is valuable and is called *What Do We Know about Effective Fourth-Grade Teachers and Their Classrooms?* (It can be downloaded from the CELA Web site by following onscreen instructions.)

CLASSROOM DIALOGUE HELPS STRUGGLING READERS

This section (which begins on page 2) carefully explains and references how the successful middle school experience can enable students' growth. The authors emphasize that, in contrast to more successful readers, those who are struggling "adopt a relatively passive stance to learning." Enabling their improvement "requires first and foremost the development of classroom environments that sustain inquiry and reflection, agency (with all

it entails about identity and strategic action), and authentic collaborative action," say the authors. Productive interventions can be structured and require flexibility and individual response to students. "Overall it is essential that teachers notice exactly what a child is doing well and reflect back to her or him, along with constructive feedback as to what might be done to improve performance," they add.

Highlights Newsletter invites you to share the good news about developing literacy in your classroom with us, to be considered for inclusion in our **Spotlight on Developing Literacy, Schools in the News** section. Visit your Teacher Center today to obtain a submission form. We look forward to hearing from you!