

WEBWORDS 15

Literacy links

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Netting a wide audience

The *Get Ready to Read* campaign¹, mounted by the National Center for Learning Disabilities aims to build the early literacy skills of preschool children throughout the US. Its website includes a research-driven screening tool² for four year olds, and literacy-related resources for families, teachers, researchers and health professionals.

The publication *Put Reading First*³ is also designed to net a wide audience, including educators, parents and policy-makers. The site represents the outcome of a collaborative effort between the National Institute for Literacy, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the US Department of Education. It provides an evidence-based, in-depth account of instruction of K to 3s in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension.

Rocket science

These two sites are complemented by the National Reading Panel (NRP) publications page⁴ on the NICHD site, where there is a rich collection of reading research resources⁵ such as the wonderfully titled booklet⁶ *Teaching reading IS rocket science*. The NRP 2000 report confirmed that phonics instruction is not the complete answer to reading instruction (nothing new in that), and that language activities and other critical learning experiences are also important (still nothing new).

An article⁷ in *Education Week* (it takes moments to set up a free online subscription) critical of the panel's methodology and its practical application in schools, points out that the nub of the problem is not really to do with the panel's findings per se, but how they have been interpreted⁸ and implemented. An example, it seems, of policy-makers opting for the narrow⁹ view in the quest for simplistic solutions to complex issues. Rocket science indeed!

Reading rockets

The Reading Rockets¹⁰ site is one of many resource sites on the web geared to the needs of reading teachers and other interested parties. Among the gems are BBCi Learning¹¹, comprehension worksheets¹², Guys Read¹³ – a literacy initiative for boys, Helping Your Child Become a Reader¹⁴, a collection of phonemic awareness songs¹⁵, the Scholastic¹⁶ site, Starfall¹⁷, and Webbing into Literacy¹⁸

Readable research

One of the pleasures of leafing and browsing through the research on literacy is finding so many well-written, interesting, thought-provoking, and often witty, articles. And what better place to find them than the ASHA Leader, where Gail Gillon discusses phonological awareness intervention¹⁹ for children, Alan Kamhi writes about the role of the SLP in improving reading fluency²⁰, Mary Spratcher highlights key roles²¹ for SLPs in reading and writing instruction, and Denise Yess talks about literacy in public schools²².

Participants in discussion groups devoted to literacy also tend to maintain a high standard of clear written expression when they post. Examples include the *Read by Grade 3* list²³ and the *Reading Reform Foundation* message board²⁴. Whether or not you agree with the views expressed, you have to admire the way they are expressed.

No end

There is no end to the information about reading, writing and spelling on the web. Products and schemes are pushed, home-schoolers and teachers²⁵ exchange favoured methods, theorists expound their ideas, consumers have their say, researchers²⁶ put their case, and lists of resources grow and grow. In comparison, Web content for auditory processing disorders²⁷ looks like a very neat little package!

Links

1. <http://www.getreadytoread.org/>
2. <http://www.familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,63-25466,00.html>
3. http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first1.html
4. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/report.htm>
5. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/crmc/cdb/reading.htm#cpc>
6. <http://www.aft.org/edissues/rocketscience.htm>
7. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/newstory.cfm?slug=37read.h22>
8. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=33yatvin.h22>
9. <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n15/>
10. <http://www.readingrockets.org/>
11. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/>
12. <http://www.rhlschool.com/reading.htm>
13. <http://www.guysread.com/>
14. <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reader/>
15. <http://www.songsforteaching.com/PA.html>
16. <http://teacher.scholastic.com/>
17. <http://www.starfall.com/>
18. <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/wil/home.html>
19. <http://professional.asha.org/news/021203a.cfm>
20. <http://professional.asha.org/news/030415f.cfm>
21. <http://professional.asha.org/news/literacy.cfm>
22. <http://professional.asha.org/news/020910f.cfm>
23. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/readbygrade3/>
24. <http://members5.boardhost.com/debbierf1/>
25. <http://www.literatureforliterature.ecsd.net/>
26. <http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/res/literacy/>
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