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FORUM

Struggling Readers

As a teacher with 15 years of experience, I know that the article (“Why Can’t I Read?,” spring 2003) was accurate in the three-tier approach, the PA mentions, the need for systematic phonics instruction, and the use of high-interest materials. I was originally looking for information on the correlation between poor letter formation and the ability to read and write. Why is it that when a struggling reader also writes poorly we think it’s an indication of a lack of literacy skills, but when a child who reads easily and writes well has poor letter formation we say it’s because of their genius?

Toni Morgan
*Bilingual Teacher
Plainfield, Illinois*

Dual-Purpose Libraries

Do you know of any cases in which public libraries have been placed inside elementary schools (“Community Connectivity,” fall 2003)? I’m working on a project in which the school district is interested in partnering with the local library system to build a library within a new elementary school they are planning.

However, there are a host of issues—security, accessibility, etc.—that we must address to make this work. Has this been done before? If so, where, and can you provide a contact?

Richard LeBlanc
*Architect
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania*

Northwest Education *responds:*
We’ve discovered a few resources. According to the following Web site, Alaska has explored this issue: www.library.state.ak.us/dev/aslld.html. Also, we recently had a visitor from Montana, who is both a county librarian and a school librarian: Julie Hainline, Seeley-Swan High School, Missoula Public School District, www.mcps.k12.mt.us/highschool/seeleyswan/library/library.htm.

Considering Individual Needs

The fact that smaller class size contributes to a closer relationship between a teacher and the students leads one to believe that behavior problems should lessen (“Tapping the Benefits of Smaller Classes,” winter 2000).

Behavioral problems are one of the major factors used in evaluating students, and too often students of various ethnicities are judged based on a traditional Eurocentric model of behavior. That is not to say that a child should be allowed to run all over the class whenever he/she feels like it, but rather that a multiplicity of learning styles need to be considered or the child could indeed suffer.

We are learning that we need to do more of what teachers used to do: Spend more time learning how a student responds to various teaching techniques.

Martin V. Tooley
*School Founder
Daytona Beach, Florida*

We want to hear from you! Send your letters to the editor, article ideas, and tips on places where good things are happening to nwdufeedback@nwrel.org. Letters may be edited for length or clarity.