



CURRICULUM DESIGNERS

CURRICULUM DESIGNERS INC, RYE, NY

Curriculum Mapping Newsletter

Back-to-School Edition
Volume I, No. 6

Dear Kathy,

This month we again feature the crucial issue of literacy across the curriculum as well as a concrete example of how authentic curriculum can be enhanced through technology.

In This Issue

- East Lansing, MI - September 28-29
- Making Learning Irresistible...
- Why is Literacy Important?
- A Virtual Walk Through Mabry School ...
- Creating a Literate Environment - Observations from the Field
- Upcoming Fall Conferences and Workshops
- Released in April ... *Active Literacy Across the Curriculum*
- PBS Online Courses for your consideration...
- Mark your calendar for the 2007 National Institute...
- A "Welcome Back" Message from @eidi ...

Making Learning Irresistible...



by Dr. Tim Tyson

Tim Tyson is the Principal of [Mabry Middle School](#). He earned his doctorate at the University of Illinois and has been in the field of education for over 25 years. A technology enthusiast, Dr. Tyson began the Mabry Film Festival, when he arrived at Mabry in 2001, as a way to help teachers and students infuse technology into highly engaging learning practices for students.

Mabry won Scholastic and Intel corporation's prestigious [Schools of Distinction Award for Technology Innovation](#) and The School Library Journal has referred to Tim Tyson as "the Pied Piper of Educational Technology."

Mabry Middle School embarked on project-based learning strategies as a means of getting students more actively and meaningfully



**East Lansing, MI -
September 28-29**



**ACTIVE LITERACY IN
EVERY CLASSROOM**

***How Do We Improve
and Sustain Student
Performance Over
Time?***

This conference will be co-presented by Dr. Jacobs and Dr. Rachel Billmeyer



During this two-day intensive conference participants will learn to:

- Employ seven specific school-wide active literacy strategies
- Integrate core adopted materials into school and district maps
- Use Curriculum Mapping to build literacy strategies with English language learners

engaged in learning by creating relevant knowledge products that make our world a better place. We believe that our culture as a whole underestimates children and the significance of the contributions they can make.



The film festival, one of our project-based learning activities, began in 2001 and was our first effort to use technology in engaging and powerful ways to create project-based learning products. Each team in our school submitted a two-minute movie based on a theme. Students, teachers, and parents were all trained in the basics of story telling and movie-making on a laptop computer. We were simply stunned by the results, having no idea that students could produce products that were so powerful, professional, and utterly compelling.

[Read the entire article here ...](#)

Why is Literacy Important?

by Amy Benjamin

Amy Benjamin is President of the Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar; co-author of Grammar Alive! A Guide for Teachers, author of books on Differentiated Instruction, author of Writing in the Content Areas and author of An English Teachers Guide to Performance Tasks and Rubrics: Middle School and High School.



It would be impossible to underestimate the importance of proficiency in literacy as an essential skill. School is a place of language. Language is characterized as having layers of formality, and we call those layers *register*. There's an informal register of language that we use for social conversations at home and with friends. And then there's the formal register, specifically, the academic register that is the currency of school. It is the development of that academic register, expressed in reading and writing, which determines the difference between success and failure to thrive in school.

A student can be perfectly fluent in informal social language. She can be adept at producing elaborate, even poetic, messages through speech. She can be brilliant at interpreting the subtleties of conversation, at reading body language and facial expressions. These perceptions are important. But if she fares poorly in the literate world, persistent academic shortcomings will discourage her and her

Analyze assessment data for both subject matter skill needs and literacy needs
Align to specific state standards
Actualize and employ pacing guides
Develop cogent and rigorous benchmark assessments
Assist middle and high school subject area teachers on how to integrate literacy strategies without taking away from subject area instruction
Prepare for test-taking environments
Gain strategies for developing independent test-takers
Improve note-taking strategies developmentally and consistently in each class
Examine and critique various CM software
Get started with a CM initiative that focuses on active literacy

Dr. Jacobs' co-presenter, Dr. Rachel Billmeyer is an internationally known educational consultant. She has taught elementary, secondary, and university level classes, and is known for her work with reading in the content areas and reading assessment practices.

Rachel is author of *Teaching Reading in the Content Areas: If Not Me Then Who?* and *Strategic Reading in the Content Areas and Strategies to Engage the Mind of the Learner*. She has served

opportunities beyond school will be limited.

Learning to write coherently is important because writing equips the mind to think. We think of writing as a way to show what we know to others, but writing is also a means for learning. When we take notes, journalize, jot down questions, annotate text, create graphic organizers, we are writing to clarify our *own* understandings.

[For more information, visit Amy's website here ...](#)

A Virtual Walk Through Mabry School ...

by Earl Nicholas,
Newsletter Editor

Heidi recently asked me to contact our friend and long-time mapping facilitator, Dr. Lynda Martin, Area 4 Assistant Superintendent from [Cobb County Schools in GA](#), to ask her about "that Middle School project." What a delightful surprise it was when Lynda put me in touch with Tim Tyson, whose article headlines this issue...



Tim sent me some links and suggested I just surf for myself. Tim, his staff, *but most significantly HIS STUDENTS*, have implemented the kind of 21st century curriculum I have been preaching about for years.

My tour began here at [The 5th Annual Mabry Film Festival](#). (NOTE: *The still photos are great, but the kids' videos are detailed and touring Mabry requires Cable, DSL or better*). After touring some of the student- created videos, I discovered the [Mabry Podcast Center](#) where anyone with a computer or an iPod can follow their program.

Computer, iPods, and videos are the electronic pencils for today's children, and Mabry is one example of a school which is mapping authentic curriculum for their future in the 21st Century. The best thing I can recommend is do what I did - click the links above and enjoy the student-created multi- media projects from Mabry.

Know of other schools implementing innovative techniques? Send us your information. We want to continue featuring authentic mapping of curriculum from our readers.

[Click here to start at the Mabry homepage ...](#)

LEARNER. She has served as Program Chair for the Midwest Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Conference, and has the NE Literacy Award.

[Register now for the East Lansing Literacy Workshop...](#)

Helpful Links...

[Register for Fall Workshops](#)

[More About Curriculum Designers and what we do...](#)

Mapping Software



[TechPaths](#)



[Rubicon Atlas](#)

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Creating a Literate Environment - Observations from the Field



by Dr. Rachel Billmeyer

Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.
Mortimer Adler

(Read a short bio on Rachel in the East Lansing article to the right and more [here](#).)

Why is literacy so important?

Strategic reading is an essential life-long skill.

Living and working in today's society with complex social, political, and economic issues and fast-paced technological advances requires people to be capable and competent information gatherers, decision makers, and problem solvers. Roland Barth, professor at Harvard, reports that graduates of schools leave knowing about 2 percent of what they will need to know to function in the workplace, family, and community; 98 percent (of the information) is yet to come. To be productive citizens people must be capable of handling, manipulating, and working with text in a broad spectrum of content. This means that learning to read and reading to learn must be at the top of each district and classroom agenda; it is critical that literacy strategies be actively mapped into every classroom and environment.

What are some strategies teachers employ to promote a literate environment?

Strategic readers know that reading is thinking cued by text, that it is more than simply moving one's eyes across a page of symbols. They know how to engage their minds to construct meaning from text. Increasingly, teachers are incorporating reading strategies so that students will learn how to successfully interact with text before, during, and after reading. For example, a variety of discussion strategies, such as community circle, creative debate, scored discussion highlighted in [Strategies to Engage the Mind of the Learner](#) (Billmeyer, 2003), are used to promote thinking and understanding. Rather than merely being a recipient of information transmitted by the teacher, students actively engage in conversations based on the text to construct their own knowledge about the topic.

[Read the entire article here ...](#)

Upcoming Fall Conferences and Workshops

Visit us this Fall at one of our upcoming conferences:

- September 28-29, 2006 - East Lansing, MI ([Register here](#))
- November 14-15-16, 2006 - Albany, NY ([Register here](#))
- November 29-Dec. 1, 2006 - San Diego, CA ([Register here](#))

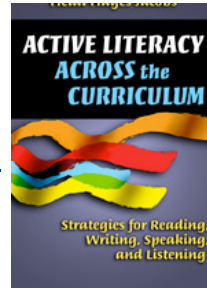
[View the Fall Conference Schedule here ...](#)

Released in April ... *Active Literacy Across the Curriculum*

Heidi Houshork

Eye on Education publishers released Heidi's newest book this past April - [Active Literacy Across the Curriculum](#)

[Read more and order your copy here ...](#)



PBS Online Courses for your consideration...



We are proud to feature the popular PBS [Curriculum Mapping Online Course](#) in two modules developed by Heidi Hayes Jacobs. Many educators have found these an easy and convenient way to update their personal knowledge base.

We will feature more details about online courses in our Back-to-School issue next month, but meanwhile check the information on the link below if you want to have a head start...

[Learn more about online courses here ...](#)

Mark your calendar for the 2007 National Institute...

Mark your calendar now for the 13th Annual [National Curriculum Mapping Institute](#)

Pre- conferences July 17-18 and [National Curriculum Mapping Institute](#) on July 19-22, 2007.

In 2007 we will return to [The Canyons Resort](#) in beautiful Park City, Utah.

For more information and to reserve your spot now, contact CurricMapping@aol.com or use our online link below.

[Register for National Conference here ...](#)

A "Welcome Back" Message from @eidi ...

Welcome to the fall issue of our curriculum mapping newsletter. As readers of this letter, you're part of a community of curriculum thinkers, dreamers, and practitioners. We know that the beginning of the school year sets teachers and learners into motion. Its an



excellent time to project new possibilities for curriculum mapping ventures. In future issues, we will be examining the critical role of the student in mapping. We will be sharing work on linking digital portfolios to teacher maps.



Another area that is receiving attention is linking literacy with curriculum mapping. This newsletter issue features some thoughts from Amy Benjamin and Rachel Billmeyer, two of the nation's leading authorities on reading. I look forward to collaborating with Rachel in [East Lansing, Michigan in September](#). Curriculum Designers will be sponsoring a one day training in Ulster County, New York in January with Amy on strategies for math and science testing on the NY Regents Exam.

Many school people have asked about bilingual education and mapping. Our conference in [San Diego on November 30 - December 1](#) will focus on two areas: 1) a pre-conference on the nuts and bolts of mapping with Janet Hale, and 2) literacy strategies for all learners. Heidi Hayes Jacobs and Janet Hale will be featured. As part of that program, we have invited Evelyn Arroyo to share her expertise with the bilingual population.

In addition to the Active Literacy and CM conferences, we will feature an institute [November 14-16 in Albany, New York](#) with Dr. Susan Udelhofen, Dr. Jacobs, Alice Learn, Jeanne Tribuzzi, and Earl Nicholas. The pre-con on November 14 will be Curriculum Mapping Basics and the Nov. 15-16 institute will be Integrating Assessment Data and Standards in Maps K-12.

We encourage you to send your ideas, articles, and questions for future issues, and wish you a great start for a promising school year.

-- Best, Heidi

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