

Educator's Voice

NYSUT'S JOURNAL OF BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION

VOLUME I, SPRING 2008

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An Early Childhood Practitioner's Guide: Developmentally Appropriate Literacy Practices for Preschool-Age Children

Early Literacy in School: Getting off on the Right Foot

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New Hope for Struggling Learners

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How Drawing in Conjunction with Writing Contributes to Literacy

Comprehension Strategies that Enhance Literacy

Facilitating Professional Conversations: Data-Driven Planning and Instruction for the Early Childhood Classroom

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Early Literacy

THE FOUNDATION OF ALL LEARNING

In this issue ...

There is compelling evidence that high-quality early literacy instruction can lead to significant, long-term improvements in student achievement. Educators, parents, researchers and policymakers alike are developing a growing understanding that early literacy is an investment that yields critical academic and economic gains.

This premier issue of *Educator's Voice* explores early literacy through a framework that raises questions and provides practical strategies for building literacy skills among young learners. In this journal, you will find research on several developmentally appropriate literacy activities from birth through elementary levels; strategies for helping struggling readers; information on integrating vocabulary instruction with literacy development; and much more. Enjoy *Educator's Voice*, and we look forward to your feedback.





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Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the first issue of *Educator's Voice*, NYSUT's journal of best practices in education. *Educator's Voice* provides research-based, field-tested strategies that have been used by experienced educators to help schools close achievement gaps and ensure all students have a solid academic foundation.

Research has shown repeatedly that early literacy — the theme of our first issue — is critical to ensuring high levels of student achievement. The National Institute for Early Education Research has found that students with strong early literacy skills benefit academically, socially and, eventually, professionally. In short, the gift of early literacy stays with students throughout their entire continuum of learning.

Among educators and policymakers, the focus on early literacy is increasing. In New York, more students than ever are enrolled in publicly funded pre-K programs, thanks to a new initiative supported by the state Legislature and Board of Regents. Schools throughout New York are using increases in state aid to direct more resources at early education and literacy. NYSUT has offered professional development opportunities focused on improving literacy instruction in elementary and middle-level education and among English language learners.

Our challenge as educators is to translate this momentum into proven, classroom-based strategies that will enhance our students' literacy skills. We can accomplish this by providing a forum through which educators can share best practices they have used to make a difference and achieve positive outcomes for all students. That is the mission of *Educator's Voice*.

Enjoy *Educator's Voice* and, as always, we welcome your comments.

Sincerely,

Maria Neira
Vice President, NYSUT

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