

Reading Advice to Parents

An open letter to parents in the journal of the BC Teachers' of English Language Arts provides some advice on installing a love of reading. Among the suggestions offered are:

1. Spend time reading with your child every day, discussing the story as you read and answering questions.
2. Surround your child with books by putting a bookshelf in the bedroom to hold their favourite books. Also take trips to the bookstore and choose books together. Get a library card for your child.
3. Model reading for your child by allowing your child to witness you reading. Avoid television and sit in a cozy place while you read.
4. Make language visible with alphabet posters, puzzles, books and songs to help children recognize letters. On the advantages of raising a reader child, the teachers' group says that children who love reading are often very curious about writing. Reading also provides language structure, boosts vocabulary, develops imagination, and supports cognitive thought processes.

Once the child is in school, it is suggested that parents continue reading with the child by picking books that are exciting and beyond their capabilities. It also suggests making sure that the child has lots of writing supplies such as a journal or a diary.

As the child matures, parents and children can join book clubs together, subscribe to magazines of mutual interest, and obtain a subscription to the local newspaper and discuss key stories. Above all, the teachers advise that parents "meet the teachers of your children to establish reading, writing, and homework expectations."

Conservation in the CURRICULUM

Some teachers may hesitate to approach complex environmental topics such as climate change or declining fish stocks because, unlike conventional school subjects, learning resources are not often available for environmental issues. According to Carla Sbrocchi of the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre, the lack of resources should not be a disincentive for teachers to approach environmental topics in the classroom. She suggests that conservation is a subject that can be integrated into many parts of the curriculum. For example, the many possible sides of a conservation issue can include economics, science, culture, politics, geographical boundaries, and history.

Sbrocchi suggests that by using a multi-disciplinary approach "educators can meet curriculum requirements while highlighting conservation issues." At the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre, this multi-

disciplinary approach has been used to create a resource package for teachers as part of the *Leatherback Turtle Awareness Program*. Through the program, tools will be developed for students to address issues of global concern within their home, school or community. As a first step, students engage in an information gathering exercise and analyze the perspectives of all stakeholders from fishermen to third world countries.

A measurement of a conservation-based lesson involves empowering students to take action. In the *Leatherback Turtle Awareness Program*, students are encouraged to use their knowledge to engage and involve other students and members of the community in local conservation activities.

For more information and resources related to the *Leatherback Turtle Awareness Program* log on to www.vanaqua.org.

WAR TOYS

According to the Manchester Guardian, the Sony company has patented the term "shock and awe" for a new computer board game. The expression "shock and awe" was used to describe the bombing campaign in the recent Iraq war. The Guardian newspaper also

reported that a British company will introduce a computer game, books, cards, and magazines based on the war, called Back to Baghdad. Other toy introductions related to the war and recently announced include an Axis of Evil board game.

