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# *MPE Journal*

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5th grade students studying an ant farm

# YOUR MISSISSIPPI PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS ORGANIZATION

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**Executive Director**  
Judy Rhodes

Frank H. Williamson, Editor

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Cover photograph  
by Frank H. Williamson



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## DEDICATION OF FACILITY FOR

submitted by Philene Allen

Because of her outstanding contributions to Mississippi Delta Community College during her tenure, Dr. Farilyn Bell, and two other of her comrades, is being honored at that school's Annual Alumni Meeting. The ABE-GED classroom, located in the Allen-Foley Vocational-Technical Complex, is being named in memory of the former Director of Adult Basic Education.

Dr. Bell began work at Mississippi Delta Community College in 1992 as administrator of the literacy van. She became the first full-time ABE Director at MDCC in 1998. She was instrumental in the permanent establishment of the ABE/GED program at the college, and the location of the classes at sites throughout the Delta. Dr. Bell assisted with obtaining funding for full-time instructors, and permanent class sites on campus in Moorhead and at the college center in Greenwood.

Dr. Bell was a member of the Mississippi Association of Adult and Community Education (MAACE). As a member of MAACE, she served on various committees and the Board of Directors. She was also a member of the Faculty Association at both the local and state levels, and served as secretary-treasurer at the local level. She was also a member of Mississippi Professional Educators.

Prior to her employment at MDCC, she worked as an elementary school teacher. She also served as a volunteer instructor with the Mississippi Department of Corrections

## Cost of Funding Education v. Cost of Not Funding Education

By Dr. Hank M. Bounds  
State Superintendent of Education



During my first year as State Superintendent of Education, we have faced numerous challenges. Certainly, it will long be remembered as the “Year of Katrina.” It was, hopefully, a once-in-a-career challenge. However, there is another challenge that seems to plague the education community year after year: funding.

We all know that Mississippi is the poorest state in the nation. Therefore, we have the largest number of students who are considered “at-risk.” This term has evolved because students who grow up in economically disadvantaged homes are often at risk of failing in school. They usually have parents and grandparents who failed in school and, because of this, have become trapped in a cycle of generation after generation facing a lifetime of low wages and difficult circumstances.

These children are not less able to learn. However, they often require additional services because they haven’t spent their early years in a print-rich environment and haven’t had the tools and experiences that help develop young minds. When a kindergarten teacher greets her students on the first day, she knows that her classroom is filled with students with different skill levels. Some have been read to from the time they were babies; others have never been read to at all. Some have made many trips to the local library; others don’t know what a library is. Employing only one teaching strategy to reach all of these children would not work—some would be bored and others would not be able to keep up.

I like to compare it to shipbuilding. Before Northrop Grumman can begin building ships, they must have the raw materials—steel. If they receive the steel that is already refined, they can send it straight to the assembly line. If the steel is not refined, they must put additional effort and resources into the steel to get it ready for the assembly line. When it gets to the assembly line, it is just as strong as the first shipment

of steel. If Northrop Grumman tries to cut corners in preparing the steel, the final product will suffer.

The same is true in education. If we try to cut corners in providing additional services that some of our students need, the final product will suffer. The 5 percent at-risk supplement to MAEP that districts currently receive does not give them the resources necessary to fully meet the needs of at-risk students. The Mississippi Board of Education recommends that the Legislature increase the at-risk component to 10 percent so that districts can more adequately provide the additional instructional materials, one-on-one instructional time and tutoring services necessary to help at-risk students become successful students. The percentage recommended nationally for the at-risk component is 40 percent, so we need to increase our percentage each year until we meet at least this minimum recommendation.

We must make a commitment to provide the resources necessary for our teachers to reach all of our students. The Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) was designed to do this. However, it has been fully funded only once. In addition, the sales tax diversion into the Education Enhancement Funds for classroom supplies has been partially absorbed into the Mississippi Adequate Education Program since 2003. Further, for the past five years, the \$20 million for the Public School Building Fund has been used to fund MAEP, resulting in a loss of \$100 million to school districts for facility needs. Because of this, in addition to underfunding MAEP, districts have not had the additional needed resources necessary for buildings and instructional support.

Some of our schools are in terrible condition and the districts cannot afford the substantial costs for renovations and repairs. When a student goes to school each day in these conditions, it sends a message to them that their community does not value education enough to provide facilities that inspire learning. These schools are also a

**Continued to page 15**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### DR. STACY REEVES

In Aesop's Fable, *The Wind and the Sun*, the two friends discuss who the stronger one is, and to solve their discussion, they have a contest. They see a traveler walking down the road, and they agree that they will decide their depute using this man: the one who can get him to remove his jacket is the stronger one. The wind begins the contest by blowing first gently then harder and harder, but all the while the man clutches his coat closer to himself. The wind gives up. The sun begins the challenge by warming the man. The sun shines brighter and warmer until he removes his coat. The sun persuaded the man to remove this coat by shining on him, but the wind's harsh breath only made him clutch his coat closer.

This fable is relevant to teaching in many ways. One easy way to sum it up is to say that using "warm ways" will win more people to our side than cold, harsh words ever will. As teachers, we lead by example. If we take harsh tones with our administrators, coworkers, students and their guardians, we can expect to fail in our relationships. People do not willingly follow a difficult person, but they do follow a warm, strong leader. It is important to ask yourself, "Am I influencing my students through thoughtful, concerned teaching, or am I negative, inconsiderate, and difficult?"

In one of my Masters level graduate classes, I designed an assignment where teachers must write how they are "artists" in their classrooms. They must verbalize the good work that they do and how they personalize teaching with their students. When asked, "How do you demonstrate artistry in your daily teaching?", my graduate student Jamie, a classroom teacher, wrote the following:

I have a sense of purpose in what I do each day. I set my expectations high for all students. In teaching, I try to demonstrate a willingness to adapt and change to meet students' needs. I don't worry about the unknown or doing something wrong. I am very reflective. I analyze what I do in class and ask myself "what works?". I express how I feel about teaching daily. My students and coworkers know that I love my job, I love my students, and I love my school. They know this; therefore, they want to succeed.

She continues with the following:

I always wear a smile. I express my enthusiasm about the content as well as how to act civilly. I model how things should be done, but I do not criticize when you find another way that has the same end results. I appreciate the fact that we are all different. I try to capture children's hearts; then I am able to capture their minds.

This is the perfect example of leading through warmth and love for others. May we all aspire to do the same.

## FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Below is a letter that was sent to the editor of all daily and weekly newspapers through out the State.*



Dear Editor:

Much has been said and written concerning the funding of the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) in the last several weeks, as there should be. No single appropriation considered by our State Legislature is more important to our State, our children, and our future than MAEP. This program is how we, as state taxpayers, provide the resources necessary to educate our children. It is designed to address two primary concerns: 1) adequate resources for a very basic education, and 2) equity in the distribution of those resources to insure that every child, regardless of where he/she lives in this state, is guaranteed that minimum amount of resources. The MAEP funds provide for teacher salaries, buses, textbooks, and operational cost.

The MAEP has been the most reviewed, debated, and audited of any program in the state. The PEER Committee has officially reviewed it at least twice; the Department of Audit has reviewed and audited it; official task forces have reviewed it; legislative committees have reviewed it and debated it extensively. The results of all those reviews???? Only minor adjustments have been made. Why??? Because, if properly funded, MAEP works.

There are two basic reasons why MAEP will work, if funded: 1) the “formula” is not hypothetical; it is based on the real cost of educating a child in Mississippi. The calculation comes from actual costs of Mississippi school districts, and is audited each and every year, as required by state law, by either an independent auditing firm approved by the State Department of Audit, or by the Audit Department itself, and 2) it is distributed, on a “per student” basis. The primary basis for the formula is simply the number of students in attendance times the “per student” cost, with adjustments for equity and “at-risk” students.

It is time to go ahead and fund the program that will provide our educational system the resources it needs to be successful. Mississippi now has in place one of the strongest accountability systems for K-12 education in the nation. This accountability system is working; but it can work at a much faster and more efficient pace if we provide the proper resources. We all know how important a basic education system is to our future.

Independent studies stress the importance of education; the business community stresses the importance of education. Governor Barbour recently remarked to the Mississippi School Board Association: “Education is the number one economic development issue and the number one quality of life issue in our state. It is rightly the number one priority of state government.” So let’s allow the system, already in our state law, to work—**STRONG ACCOUNTABILITY COUPLED WITH ADEQUATE FUNDING.**

Can we possibly put the politics aside, and do what’s right for our children and our future? Provide an adequate and stable funding source for our educational system.

Sincerely,

Judy Rhodes  
Executive Director, MS Professional Educators

## AN EDUCATOR VISITS CHINA

By: Stacy Reeves

I had the wonderful chance to travel to China on behalf of William Carey University in Hattiesburg, MS. I was in Beijing, Qingdao, Linyi, and Guangzhou, China. These are cities in both north and south China and all of them are along the eastern edge of this vast country. I was there from June 15 to July 2, 2006.

I am an Assistant Professor at William Carey University in the School of Education. I teach undergraduates, masters' students, and specialist students. My field is literacy education. I traveled with two other WCU teachers. Our purpose was to recruit college students and to build partnerships with schools and universities in China.

I had the opportunity to talk to teachers and professors as well as students from colleges, high schools, middle schools, and young children. I talked about living in Mississippi and in the United States. I discussed our system of "universal education" where each person is required to attend school and all people have the potential to attend college. I talked about my hobbies, my family, and how to speak English - American style!

The Chinese people I spoke to were very open to talking with me and interested in my culture. I was curious about them as well. I learned several new things including how to eat with Chinese chopsticks (which are very long, wide, and a bit slippery), what

squid tastes like (not like chicken!), and how the Chinese are inquisitive of westerners (which is what we are in the United States).

Because China is not a religiously open country, I was not able to share my faith as I would have been able to do in the U.S. I could discuss my religious beliefs if someone asked me, but I could not approach someone first to share my personal spiritual convictions.

Traveling overseas always teaches me something new. I value the Chinese culture, and at the same time, I have a greater appreciation for my culture own. Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* was right: There is no place like home! When I travel, I always enjoy working with children and having the chance to see them in their learning environments. I think the things that I enjoy the most about traveling are representing my country, my state, and the profession of teaching to others.

I truly enjoyed this trip, so much so that I am returning in December to teach as a visiting professor at Linyi University. My goals are to show that excellent programs in education are available throughout our state (with one wonderful place being my University), to demonstrate that high quality teaching and learning are possible by someone who received all of her higher educational degrees from Mississippi universities, and to promote our country and state to the people of China.



# MISSISSIPPI PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS' ANNUAL CONVENTION

Jackson Hilton • Jackson, Mississippi  
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Great Food, Fellowship, and Information



## Meet Your MPE Board Officers

### President, Dr. Stacy R. Reeves



**Stacy Reeves, Ph.D.** (Ph.D., Mississippi State University, 2001; M.E.D., University of Southern Mississippi, 1992; B.S., University of Southern Mississippi, 1990) is an Assistant Professor at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, MS.

She has taught at William Carey College, U.S.M., and Mississippi State as well as in the Hattiesburg Public Schools. Her educational interests include College-to-Community Partnerships, Literacy, and Technology Infusion. She enjoys reading and traveling with her husband, Ray.

“Serving on the Board of Directors for Mississippi Professional Educators is professionally and personally one of the greatest experiences of my life. It is an honor and a privilege to serve with a group of members who are dedicated to the very best of everything for the children of Mississippi, and by extension, for all of the children around the world.”

### Secretary-Treasurer, Dianne Sellers

**Dianne Sellers** is from Quitman and has worked in the field of education for 30 years.

She is currently working on her practicum for school psychometry from William Carey University. It will be completed in February 2007.

Dianne will work for Westat in January 2007. As a fieldworker, she will be part of the NAEP (National Assessment of Education Progress) team to administer tests to students in several schools in central Mississippi.

After serving on the board from District 5, Dianne is the current secretary of MPE.



### President-elect, Dennis Silas

Dennis Silas received his college education from Delta State University, and has been teaching for seventeen years. He has been a school administrator for twelve years. Dennis is beginning his third year as Superintendent of Education for the Drew (Mississippi) School District. His entire education career, including his student teaching, has been in the Drew School District.

His wife is Brenda, and they have a daughter, Angela, who is an Education Administrator at the age of 24.



### Past President, Dr. Steve Bishop



**Dr. Steve Bishop** is presently serving as the Dean of Students at Southwest Mississippi Community College in Summit, Mississippi. In 1992, Dr. Bishop began teaching at Southwest, serving as a Speech Communication instructor, before moving to Dean of Students last year.

He also serves as part-time Minister of Music at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church near Bogue Chitto, Mississippi. Steve has degrees from Southwest Mississippi Community College (A.A.), Southeastern Louisiana University (M.A.), and University of Southern Mississippi (Ph.D.).

Steve is married to the former Melanie Hammill of Poplarville. Melanie works as a Pharmacist at King's Daughter's Medical Center in Brookhaven. Steve and Melanie have one daughter, Katherine, who is two years old.

Dr. Bishop welcomes your ideas for MPE, and looks forward to working closely with each of the board members, Dr. Buckley and Judy Rhodes.

**Keep in touch with your  
MPE Office.  
Let us know what's happening in  
your school!**

## MEET YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2006-2007

### District 1, Pam Simmons



**Pam Simmons** has been married to a wonderful, Christian man, for thirty years, and they are the proud parents of three very successful children, and two grandchildren.

Pam teaches fourth grade at East Union Elementary School. She and her family attend Chesterville Calvary Baptist Church where she has served as organist for 30 years. She enjoys gardening and interior decorating (and loves to watch HGTV).

### District 3, Rosie Brown



**Rosie Brown** lives in Greenville, and works for the Greenville Public School District as an educator. She teaches third grade at Matty Akin Elementary School.

She is married to Tommie Lee Brown, and has one daughter, Kimberly and a 2 year-old grandson, Joshua .

### District 2, Deborah Roane



**Deborah Roane** is the Special Education Teacher at Bruce High School. She has been teaching in Calhoun, MS for 19 years.

She has served as Yearbook advisor at Bruce High School, has represented Bruce HS at the past two annual meetings of the MS branch of the Council for Exceptional Children.

### District 4, Amy Prisock



**Amy Prisock** is the Coordinator with the Office of Clinical/Field-Based Instruction at Mississippi State University, and has taught K-12 for fourteen years.

She has received many awards, including the Teacher of the Year from Ward Stuart Elementary School, Starkville SD, and the Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year, and Phi Delta Kappa Outstanding Teaching Award.

Amy helped pilot the Distance Learning Program for the College of Education which is still in place at MSU.

If you have paid your dues, but haven't received your membership card, please contact the MPE office.

## MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2006-2007

### District 5, Lia Landrum



**Lia Landrum** is a 20 year veteran of Jones Co SD. She obtained her BS and Masters from USM. Her many accreditations include being named STAR teacher of the year five times, Alan Barton's Educator of the Year, S. Jones HS teacher of the year, as well as Who's Who Among Women, and Who's Who in American Education.

Mrs. Landrum has been married to Jim Landrum for 28 years and has two teenage sons.

### District 7, Rhonda Travis



**Rhonda Travis** grew up in Jackson, MS and attended Murrah High School, Southwest Community College, and Mississippi State University.

She earned her BA in English and Secondary Education. She continued her education at William Carey College, earning a Master's degree in English.

Rhonda has been teaching 18 years. Presently she is at North Pike High School in Summit, MS, and is teaching French I and II, High School English, and College English. Rhonda also teaches to other schools via the satellite classroom.

She is married to William Travis, and has two boys, Matt, 15, and Jesse, 11. She and her family live in rural south Pike County, and attend Magnolia First Baptist Church.

### District 6, Becky Fields



**Becky Fields** received her B.S. from MSU, and her Master of Education from Mississippi College.

The honors she had received include: MS Counseling Association School Counselor of the Year, MS Economic Council STAR Teacher Recipient, and Kappa Delta Pi Education Honorary; National Board Certified Counselor, National Certified School Counselor, and member of Mississippi Counseling Association.

She is currently the Director of Counseling at Ridgeland High School, Ridgeland, MS.

### District 8, Dr. Barry Morris



**Dr. Barry Morris** received his BA from Univ. of Mobile, his M.S. from University of Southern Mississippi, and his PhD from the University of South Florida.

He served two years in Thailand in educational missions. He helped to design three charter schools, and he opened nine magnet schools.

He taught twelve years at the University of South Florida's College of Education.

Presently he is the Chair and Assistant Professor at William Carey College's School of Education.



# YOUNG AUTHORS CELEBRATION A TREASURY OF YOUNG AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS

by Dr. Barry Morris, Chair and Assistant Professor  
at William Carey College's School of Education

William Carey University's School of Education hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Young Authors Celebration on February 3, 2006. Over 320 students in grades one through eight accompanied by teachers and parents attended the day long event. These students represented ten area schools from six districts: Hattiesburg, Forrest, Petal, Marion, Lamar, and Jones. Students worked with their teachers through the fall semester writing and illustrating their own books. Ten published authors and illustrators were featured during the Celebration seminars.

Young Authors Celebration honors the creativity of young artists while promoting lifelong reading, writing, and visual expression. Each school was visited by a Carey professor during the fall semester. The young authors met with the professor for a writing seminar on the different literature genres. At that time each student received a book to encourage their writing experience. William Carey professors, staff, undergraduate education students, and "Hank the Cowdog" welcomed the students as they arrived on campus. Students were assigned to several student leaders who held a sign indicating group numbers. They were each given a WCC bag containing a Young Author t-shirt, a book, pens, pencils and coupons. As the young authors entered Smith Auditorium, they were taken through the art gallery where they could view the Curious George Traveling Exhibit provided through a partnership with the DeGrummond Children's Library from the University of Southern Mississippi.

After the introduction of the guests for the day, Mississippi's First Lady, Marsha Barbour, spoke to the students about the importance of reading and writing. The students then attended their first assigned seminar. During the day they attended several seminars, had a box lunch in the college cafeteria. Attended a book signing by authors, given an opportunity to read excerpts from their book on video, and were able to purchase books and other items through the college bookstore.



**Our future great American illustrator.**



Illustrator seminar with a class of 1st graders.

Authors/illustrators that attended included the following:  
Debbie Edge, *A Piece of Abner's Heart*;  
Freddie Williams Evans, *A Bus of Our Own*;  
Grant Guthrie, *A Promise for the Dust*;  
Dwelina Haas (ill.), *My Crazy Christmas Catastrophe Cat*;  
B.J. Mathias, *The Gift of William the Whistler*;  
Billie Remson and Kym Garraway (ill.), *A Mississippi Spring on Bluebird Hill*;  
Kim Riggs, *Abbie Dear*;  
Shane Stanford, *Salt and Light*;  
Barbara Tillery, *The Struggle for the Life of the Republic*;  
Kathy Young and Pam Finch (ill.), *The Gift*.  
Before loading their buses at 1:00 PM, the students left their original books which were scanned into **The Mississippi**



**Treasury of Young Authors and Illustrators** (<http://www.wmcarey.edu/academics/education/yac.shtml>). These books are now available for other students to read on the internet.

Student costs were reduced to \$10.00 per person due to generous gifts from Walmart, Asbury Foundation, Barnes and Noble Bookstore, WCC faculty, Ladner/Loper Literacy Fund, Mrs. Virginia Butler, Mrs. Dwelia Haas, and WCC Admissions.

Next year's Celebration will be in early spring. Watch the William Carey Education website for more news about registering your school to attend.



**Three Young Authors**  
The dolphin book was published by Katie's parents on [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)

**MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION**

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**MPE MEMBERS ARE RECOGNIZED**

**FOR ECONOMICS EDUCATION AT ANNUAL FORUM**

by Dr. Pamela P. Smith, Ph.D.

JACKSON, MISS December 8, 2006—Members of the Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE) excel in their success in the inaugural class of Master Teacher in Economics program (MTE). Five MPE members are among the 29 teachers throughout the state who have completed the inaugural program of the MTE, a comprehensive program to permit teachers to learn microeconomics and macroeconomics and to prepare for Advanced Placement Economics as follows:

Charlotte Walker, Clinton High School; Bruce Mize (not pictured), Gentry High School in Indianola; Cheryl Goudelock, Magee High School; Marie Carpenter (not pictured), Poplarville Career Development Center and Monique Farrington (not pictured), St. Martin's High School in Ocean Springs.



**Charlotte Walker**



On the left is Dr. Paul Grimes, middle Cheryl Goudelock and on the right is Mike Walker, (former MCEE Board Member) who is Director of External Affairs for BellSouth. Cheryl is an MPE member and has completed the Mater Teacher in Economics program through the Mississippi Council on Economic Education and MSU.

The program was developed by the Mississippi Council on Economic Education (MCEE) in collaboration with the State Superintendent of Education and the Mississippi State University Center on Economic and Financial Literacy in 2005. The MTE is designed to prepare teachers to teach the course in economics that will be required for graduation starting with the class entering high school in 2008. The teachers were instructed by Dr. Meghan Millea, Associate Professor of Economics with the MSU CEEFL throughout 2005-2006 on Saturdays and worked in between sessions on a Web CT to develop their skills and to take quizzes.

The President of the MCEE, Pamela P. Smith, described the significance of the MPE teachers' accomplishments, "The fact that five MPE members have succeeded in the inaugural class of Master Teachers of Economics speaks to the readiness of the MPE to make a difference in the economy of the state. We look forward to additional success of MPE teachers in our programming," said Smith.

The MCEE is affiliated with the 57 year old New York-based National Council on Economic Education. Judy Rhodes, executive director of the MPE, is a member of the Board of Directors of the MCEE.

For additional details including how to participate in the MTE, contact MCEE offices in Jackson at 601-961-4408 or go to the website at [www.mscee.org](http://www.mscee.org).

Continued from page 11

**Representative-at-large, Mike McNeece**



Mike is a long-time member of MPE who served a term on the board in the late 80s, returned to serve as President a few years ago, and now is again serving as the at-large representative, state-wide. Originally from Tupelo, he is currently principal at Solomon Middle School in Greenville. Prior to moving to Greenville he was a social

studies teacher and principal at several other schools in North Mississippi.

With undergraduate and masters degrees from Ole Miss, Mike is now a doctoral student at Mississippi State. Since Mike has many total years service with MPE, he has been a part of many of the changes that has made MPE the largest and most respected teacher organization in Mississippi.

Mike and his wife, Lettie, enjoy travel and spending time with their families, five children, and two grandchildren.

**Retirees, Philene Allen**



**Philene Allen** returned to the Board to represent retired educators. She has been a member since 1982. She was previously on the Board, and served as State President in 2000.

She retired after 36 years as educator, and now is working part time as a teacher trainer for the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi.

Philene is married to Stuart Allen, has two daughters, Dr. Raanne Tindle and Renae Ray. She has a granddaughter, Trevor Tindle, who is in the tenth grade and grew up in MPE Board meetings and conventions.

She is an active member of the First Baptist Church in Cleveland, Delta Kappa Gamma, Cleveland Woman's Club, and Gideon's Auxiliary.

She lives in Cleveland, Mississippi.

**University, Dr. Levenia Maxwell-Barnes**

Levenia Maxwell-Barnes received her EDD in Elementary Education from North East Louisiana State University. She received her Bachelor's, Master's and Specialist degrees from Delta State University.



Currently Dr. Maxwell-Barnes is serving as Associate Professor of Education at Delta State, and is serving as Director of Safe Schools Program for the Greenville Higher Education Center.

She taught 20 years at the Louisiana College in Pineville, LA, taught school and served as Principal in public and private schools. She has been associated with Delta State University since 1999.

This year she applied for, and received, a grant from the Institutions of Higher Learning to train teachers of grade 5-12 in the area of reading.

**Community College, Gayle Greene-Aguirre**



**Gayle Greene-Aguirre** was born in Lowell, Massachusetts and raised in New England. She holds a B.A. in History from the University of Connecticut and an M.A. in Latin American History/Studies from the University of North Texas in Denton. Gayle has completed additional graduate study at the Kennesaw campus of the

University of Georgia, USM, and William Carey College. She has served both active and reserve duty as an Army Ordinance Officer and retired as a Lt. Colonel.

Gayle has taught World History at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College for the past 7 years, but has taught from 1<sup>st</sup> grade through high school for 15 years. She teaches on the Perkinston campus where she is the advisor for the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society and Director of the campus Honors Program. Last summer she served as a Faculty Scholar for Phi Theta Kappa's Honors Institute at UCLA.

An MPE member since 1998, she is married to Gil Aguirre.

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**Continued from page 5** (*Mississippi Department of Education News*)

deterrent to new businesses that consider locating in an area. The message these buildings send to potential businesses is: "This community does not value education, so therefore the potential workforce must not be properly prepared to perform our jobs."

These businesses then decide to locate in another community in another state and Mississippi's economic development suffers. Fewer jobs are available to our citizens. Fewer taxes for our state and communities are collected, both from the business and its employees.

The Institutions of Higher Learning recently commissioned a study that was conducted by the Institute for Higher Education Policy. Their findings were summarized in the publication, "Mississippi's Mandate: Why the Investment in Education Pays Off in Mississippi." The report finds that "The public economic costs of an insufficient level of educational attainment have at least two components. The first component is the decreased tax revenue due to stunted economic growth, and the second component is the increased public expenditure due to increased reliance on public social programs."

To put it in terms of dollars and cents, Mississippi's total personal income would increase by \$3.2 billion and its tax revenues would increase by \$1.1 billion if the same percentage of our minority populations held a bachelor's degree or higher as the percentage of white Mississippians who hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Currently, 24 percent of white Mississippians have a college degree, while only 11 percent of minorities in our state do.

Mississippi also spends approximately \$540 million annually on social programs. Increasing the level of educational achievement of our children today can reduce this amount dramatically. As noted in "Mississippi's Mandate," reducing the rate of teenage pregnancies could reduce spending on the associated health care and social programs by \$125 million per year.

When looking at the impact that education has on economic development, tax revenues, and the need for governmental assistance, I am left with one question. What costs more: underfunding our schools or appropriately funding education?

***MPE is looking for Building Representatives. Contact Judy Rhodes or your Area Director if you are interested.***

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## **Bay-Waveland Leader Named State's Superintendent of the Year**

from The Clarion-Ledger, December 13, 2006

Kim Stasny, Bay St. Louis-Waveland superintendent, is the 2007 Mississippi Superintendent of the Year.

She will represent Mississippi at the American Association of School Administrators Superintendent of the Year Program national conference in New Orleans March 1-3.

Stasny was named by the Mississippi Association of School Administrators.

Now serving in her eighth year as superintendent of the Bay Waveland School District, Stasny has served as an advocate for the children of her district, the Gulf Coast and the state of Mississippi.

She has traveled to Washington on a number of occasions and has testified on behalf of the Gulf Coast schools affected by Hurricane Katrina. She has been recognized on numerous occasions for her compassion and steadfast leadership during the recovery from the storm and helping to restore the lives of students in her community, said Anna Hurt, executive director of the Mississippi Association of School Administrators.



**Dr. Stasny has been an MPE member since 1996, she also was an MPE Board member from 1998 to 2000. Dr. Stasny, is a true professional and is an outstanding representative of what MPE stands for.**



## MPE MEMBER JOINS

### EARTHWATCH INSTITUTE EXPEDITION IN MALLORCA

**Regina Allen**, school librarian at Columbia Primary School, recently returned from an Earthwatch Institute expedition to the Spanish island of Mallorca. This research team joined scientists in the study of the prehistory of human migration in the western Mediterranean. Regina was sponsored by the S. A. Rosenbaum Earthwatch Fellows Program of the Phil Hardin Foundation.



From July 5<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, Regina joined 11 other Earthwatch volunteers from the United States, England and Australia. The research team was led by principal investigator, Dr. Jacqueline Waldren and Dr. David Bukach (both are from Oxford University). The volunteers assisted the researchers by excavating plots adjacent to an ancient talyot, cleaning and classifying finds and recording data from the site. This project in Mallorce is Earthwatch's longest-supported project and is in its 33rd year. In 1974 the first volunteer team helped Dr. William Waldren excavate evidence of prehistoric Mediterranean cultures on Mallorca. Now his wife continues the research and the association with Earthwatch.

Regina is looking forward to bringing all that she has learned back to the school. "I have pictures and maps of the expedition which I am eager to share with students, to enrich the curriculum and broaden their perspectives of the world."

Earthwatch Institute is based in the USA and was founded in Boston in 1971. Since then, the worldwide organization has recruited over 80,000 volunteers in support of 2,800 field research projects in 118 countries. These volunteers have contributed over 10 million hours to essential field work. Other affiliate offices in the Earthwatch Institute network are based in the United Kingdom, Australia and Japan.

Earthwatch-sponsored research addresses important environmental issues that require detailed, long term study to find practical conservation solutions. Earthwatch research focuses on measuring human impacts on our environment, learning what is necessary to sustain biodiversity, and assessing management and conservation practices. Research areas include endangered habitats, threatened species, climate change, human wildlife conflict, sustainable resource management, and earth science and cultural evolution.

Earthwatch volunteer team members share the costs of the development and management of research expeditions as well as providing essential hands-on support without which the research simply couldn't happen. No prior skills are required (except scuba certification for diving projects); however, many volunteers do bring professional or vocational skills to aid the fieldwork. Accommodation and food is included in most cases, but flights are extra. The S.A. Rosenbaum Earthwatch Mississippi Teaching Fellows Program of the Phil Hardin Foundation provides faculty of Mississippi schools and community colleges the opportunity to participate in Earthwatch Expeditions to further their personal and professional development. Eight to ten fellowships are awarded each year. Through these expeditions, educators have the opportunity to work with leading research scholars, to gain practical science experience, to work cooperatively with people of widely different backgrounds and ages and to experience different cultures and geographical/political areas of the world.



Earthwatch Institute is a world leader in the field of experiential education providing opportunities in the field and online for volunteers. Visit [www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org) or call 800-776-0188 for more information.



# MPE NEWS . . .

## AREA DIRECTOR ON THE GULF COAST

by Teresa Bryant

I recently accepted the position as an Area Director for Mississippi Professional Educators in six Gulf Coast counties. As I've traveled through this region, I've met many teachers, and I have listened to their incredible Hurricane Katrina stories. The strength and fortitude possessed by these teachers is unbelievable. So many lost their homes, yet they pushed themselves to help get their schools back up and running for the children of their community. Not only are they grieving for their lost homes and personal possessions, but for the loss of their accumulated classroom supplies. I know how attached one becomes to "stuff", having taught and collected materials for 32 years, myself. One Art teacher from St. Martin told me how she will reach for a unit, and remember that it isn't there anymore; it was lost in the storm.

Jackson County, and Ocean Springs School Districts, have been most gracious in welcoming me into their schools. Both districts remain level 5 despite the havoc that Hurricane Katrina poured upon them. When I visit each school, I usually set up an MPE table in the teachers' lounge, or their workroom.

In Ocean Springs I recently overheard a conversation which reminded me that the recovery process is on going. The hot topics included rebuilding: "who is your roofer?"; "When are you moving out of your FEMA trailer?"; "I can't wait to show you my new dishes!" As winter approaches, more and more teachers are moving out of their FEMA trailers into renovated homes. However, some schools in this area will be housed in trailers for many more seasons to come. These resilient educators, and school districts, continue to provide a safe and secure environment, demonstrating professionalism at its greatest level.



Adrian McHan, Building Representative for Van Cleave Lower Elementary School in Jackson County. Area Director, Teresa Bryant is giving her assistance.

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## MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC BROADCASTING POWER THE CLASSROOM WITH MPB EXPRESS

MPB Express/Digital Curriculum is a *free*, online media rich resource that enhances your school's technology. In addition to the over 1,400 curriculum videos provided through the library of AIMS Multimedia, a number of instructional series produced by Mississippi Public Broadcasting have been digitized and added to the video library for easier access by Mississippi teachers.

MPB Express/Digital Curriculum gives educators immediate access to thousands of video clips, still images, quizzes and tests that teachers can customize to the subjects they teach. All resources are correlated to the Mississippi Frameworks and can be accessed by computer from the Internet.

Students can also be given access to assignments and resources that allow them to complete studies from home. Teachers will find MPB Express/Digital Curriculum supports differentiated instruction, allows real-time teaching and easy lesson planning, provides Teacher Guides with reproducible activities, and promotes collaborative and self-paced learning for your students.

A User ID and Password established by each teacher are necessary to access MPB Express/Digital Curriculum. Check with your District Technology Coordinator for the access codes assigned to your district's schools.

Mississippi Public Broadcasting Education Services staff will be happy to assist your school or district to provide training activities or demonstration on the various offerings of MPB Express/Digital Curriculum. Please give us a call or email us to set up an appointment:

MPB Education Services  
(601) 432-6789 or 1-800-922-9698  
edservices@mpbonline.org

# MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S DROP-OUT RECOVERY INITIATIVE

by Dr. Wayne Stonecypher, Executive Director  
State Board for Community and Junior Colleges

## Background/Need

A high school education is essential preparation for today's world, yet far too many young people are beginning their adult lives without a high school diploma. According to SREB figures, every year, almost one-third of all public high-school students and one-half of minority students fail to graduate with their class. Many of these abandon school with fewer than two years remaining toward their diplomas.

You have probably read of famous and successful people who are high school dropouts. The group includes Pierce Brosnan (actor), Pearl Bailey (singer), Glen Campbell (singer) and many more. These people somehow found a way to have successful careers without the most basic of educational degrees. However, the list who have quit high school and met a dead end is much longer.

Mississippi is not alone when it comes to young people leaving high school without a diploma. Statistically, many Mississippi counties fall below national measures in key economic indicators. One of the primary measures of a workforce's potential is educational attainment; currently, more than 27% of the state's population lack a high school diploma or GED, compared to the national average of one-fifth. Understandably, these statistics are viewed as negative factors for businesses and industries considering locating in the region and are a major cause for concern.

The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics continues to forecast a loss of manufacturing jobs. As jobs exit our state, it is imperative to transition these workers to high-tech and high-wage advanced job skills. Unemployment rates and high availability of skilled positions have led many employers and workforce development professionals to conclude Mississippi is not suffering from a labor shortage, but rather a skills shortage. Since 1990, the demand by industry for high-skilled labor has increased, but skills surplus ratings in the majority of the counties throughout the region have declined. Negative postings in skills surplus are a strong indication that Mississippi must raise the

educational and skill level of the workforce if it is to be a major player in the global economy.

Research indicates that Mississippi has around 41,000 to 42,000 students enrolling in the first grade each year. This number has remained constant for the past 20 years. Conversely, we only have some 24,000 (57% to 59%) graduating from our public high schools each year. As a result, we have approximately 17,000 students dropping out or leaving the system for other reasons between first grade and when they would be scheduled to graduate from high school. As a result, 26% of our adult population in Mississippi does not have a high school diploma or GED.

The choice to drop out is a dangerous one since high school dropouts are more likely than those who graduate to be unemployed, living in poverty, imprisoned, unhealthy and single parents of children who drop out. Facts associated with the drop-out problem in Mississippi are overwhelming. Consider the following:

- Mississippi has a 21% non-participation rate in our adult workforce. Many of these "drop-outs" are among this number
- Our State has 19.9% of our citizens living below the poverty level (second only to Louisiana 20.3%).
- Roughly 25% of our population on Medicaid, which is another indication of poverty. Studies suggest that the United States would save \$41.8 billion in health care costs alone if young people who dropped out in 2004 were to complete one additional year of education.
- Twenty one thousand Mississippi citizens are incarcerated. Seventy-five percent (75%) of state prison inmates and 59% of



federal inmates are high school dropouts. In fact, high school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be incarcerated.

An increase in the region's educational attainment levels is an absolute necessity to compete effectively in today's economy, and, based on statistical data, it is obvious that much work is yet to be done to reach economic parity with the rest of the nation. This task will require educational, economic, governmental, business, and industry leaders to pool their talents, experiences, and resources to chart a better course for the state's economic future. If we do not reverse these trends, Mississippi is in store for a very bleak economic future.

### Recovery vs. Prevention

Numerous studies have been conducted on preventing students from dropping out of high school. Programs such as focusing on the ninth grade, setting higher graduation rates and making as part of state accountability systems, reforming high schools and communicating stay-in-school messages to students in danger of dropping out and to their families are being implemented. However, few programs are being developed to address those who have already left school. Mississippi's Community and Junior Colleges will offer a plan to legislators in 2007 intended address this issue.

The plan as proposed includes the offering of two "**Alternative Adult High School Diplomas**" to Mississippians under the age of 24 who have dropped out of high school.

- **Academic Alternative Adult High School Diploma** - A high school diploma awarded by the local community or junior college carrying the same weight and privileges as any high school diploma issued by the local secondary school district and approved by the Mississippi Department of Education. In order to obtain this diploma a student shall successfully complete the GED and additional requirements as developed by the Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges.
- **Technical Alternative Adult High School Diploma** - A high school diploma awarded by the local community or junior college carrying the same weight and privileges as any high school diploma issued by the local

secondary school district and approved by the Mississippi Department of Education. In order to obtain this diploma an student must participate in an adult basic education program, successfully complete an ability to benefits evaluation and complete a postsecondary Career or Technical program at a community or junior college.

The initiative provides for an employable skill within the Technical Alternative Adult high School Diploma. Workforce, Career and Technical Programs can be altered in innovative ways to provide this skills component. Examples of skills training components that have been proposed by the colleges that would serve the **Technical Alternative Adult Diploma** include:

- Production Technical Certification – program consists of four modules resulting in a national certification by the manufacturing Skills Standards Council
- Expanded offerings within the commercial and residential construction offerings design to fit a 6 week model.
- Expanded offerings in information technology such as Microsoft certifications, designed to fit the diploma schedule and to compliment ABE coursework.

Implementation and success of this Drop Recovery Initiative can only become a reality with legislative support and funding. With this support, Mississippi's Community and Junior Colleges are poised to offer a partial solution to the state's high school drop out problem and help move the state forward educationally and economically.

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## CUEING SYSTEMS IN READING

by Alese Simon

Cueing systems are the sets of clues that are woven into the designs and structures of the English language. All of the cueing systems available in the text make up the process of building meaning through interaction with the text (Braunger, & Lewis, 2006). There are five cueing systems that good readers use to construct meaning from text. The systems are: graphophonic, syntactic, semantic, schema or pragmatic, and purpose (Fielding, 1999).

First, the graphophonic cueing system is the sound of letters and the frequent pattern of letters in word

pronunciation. Next, syntactic cues are noted for the system of grammar rules and patterns of language. Semantic cues refer to the meaning in language that helps understand the written text. The schema cueing system, which is also referred to as pragmatic, is the use of background knowledge to assist relating words to proper meaning (Fielding, 1999). The last cueing system, purpose, refers to the ability of the reader to see beyond the words of the text with application of the text to different subjects (Tovani, 2005). The cues should be used “interactively and in a balanced way” (Fielding, 1999, p. 392) to guide a student to reading fluency

The graphophonic cueing system guides “the learner’s attention to the relationships between sounds and symbols and an important strategy for word recognition” (Braunger & Lewis, 2006, p.84). The pronunciation of words is a process of decoding phonemes. A reader must identify letter-sound or sound-symbol relationships. The reader should be instructed with strategies to use cue words to associate with specific letters. In addition, chunking can be used effectively to segment phonemes in a logical pattern (Brice, 2004).

Graphophonic cues should be modeled with quality literature with repetitive patterns. Instruction should also provide cues that the student can use later to help spell words independently, such as; *i before e except after c*. Graphophonic cues are helpful in decoding words and print accurately but should not be used in isolation (Braunger & Lewis, 2006).

Syntactic cues pertain to the rules and patterns of language. The cues include word order, punctuation, sentence structure, and language patterns. The rules are practiced by sentence formulation and explanation. Sentence formation can be practiced by scrambling a sentence and reformulating the sentence in the proper order (Sinatra, & Dowd, 1991). To isolate syntactic cues with sentence expansion and revision, the teacher can provide a simple sentence and allow the student to expand. Instruction of sentence structure and language patterns can include story retelling, classroom sharing, and role playing (Brice, 2004).

The semantic cues are the surrounding words that provide context and meaning to unknown text and ideas. The cues include vocabulary, word meaning, word analysis, and the relationship between different words (Isakson, & Spyridakis, 2002). Many visual media fall under the umbrella of semantic cues. Semantic cues can be enhanced by the use of semantic organizers to cluster and organize ideas. Story maps, episodic flowcharts, and Venn diagrams are semantic organizers (Sinatra, & Dowd, 1991). Vocabulary instruction using semantic cues involves: story books, photographic picture cards, and vocabulary folders. One of the most effective techniques

is the cloze technique in which words are left out of the written text and the reader must use surrounding words or context clues to determine the unknown word (Brice, 2004).

The schema or pragmatics cueing system involves the reader using his or her prior knowledge to help relate words to proper meaning. Life experiences can be applied to the written text to help the reader comprehend unknown words. Students with “pragmatic language disabilities may also experience difficulty with the use of language in specific content areas” (Brice, 2004, p. 40). “What students need to do is connect with the text to bring his or her beliefs, experiences, and expectations to bear on the printed word” (Lain, 2003, p.26). A lack of schema or pragmatic cues is characterized by vocabulary deficiencies. The student can benefit from exposure to quality literature and scaffolding exercises lead by the teacher.

Purpose, the fifth cueing system, is not always recognized as a separate cueing system but grouped with the schema or pragmatics cues. However, purpose cues encourage the reader to see beyond the words of the text. The text reminds the reader of his or her own experiences. The reader relates the text to other stories, movies, and novels. Then, the reader applies and connects the text to worldly concepts (Lain, 2003). Consequently, this application of the text provides a way to sort information by importance. An instructor can improve comprehension by explicitly defining the information the student must garner from a specific text (Tovani, 2005). The instructions initiate a way to hold a reader liable for comprehending and retaining information that is read. A student can make himself or herself accountable by being a “selfish reader” (Tovani, 2005, p. 50). “The selfish reader asks questions that are self-serving such as: How could I use this information? How is this information different than what I already know” (Tovani, 2005, p. 50)? Creating a personal purpose for reading can help retain and glean information from difficult text (Tovani, 2005).

In conclusion, graphophonic, syntactic, semantic, schema or pragmatic, and purpose are cueing systems that are components of language and reading. “Pseudo-readers use only one cueing system,” (Manning, 2005, p. 78) such as graphophonic. Comprehension takes place with a mixture of all of the cueing systems at various times. Fluent readers use the cueing systems in combination and not in isolation (Manning, 2005). The reading instructor should instruct, model, and apply all five cueing systems to ensure that the student has a box full of tools to “fix up” (Manning, 2005, p. 78) any break down in comprehension.

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## COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT

by Marilyn Phillips

The ultimate goal of reading is to comprehend that which has been read. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not reading (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborne, 2001). Comprehension is a constructive process of exploring and making meaning. It is a complex process that involves many mental operations taking place simultaneously (Tama & McClain, 2001).

Good readers are both purposeful and active (Armbruster et al., 2001). They recognize words and associate them with stored concepts. They develop meaningful ideas from groups of words, draw inferences, and relate what is already known to what is being read (Tama & McClain, 2001). Proficient readers read to discover. They think actively as they read. They use their knowledge of vocabulary and reading strategies to make sense of the text and how to get the most out of it (Armbruster et al., 2001).

In recent years, research has shown that comprehending readers commonly use seven cognitive strategies to aid in comprehension development. The first strategy noted is that of *making connections*. It is these connections to the text, to the world, and to background

information and experiences that make readers feel like the characters, connect to the story, or remember similar experiences (Ketch, 2005). Good readers draw on prior knowledge and experience to help them understand what they are reading (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Readers also *question* as they read. For some this strategy needs little practice. It may be so subtle that the reader is unaware that it is being done. Readers are simply coming up with their own questions as they read the material. It is these questions that guide the reader to search for additional information (Ketch, 2005). Teachers need to use questioning as a means to give students a purpose for reading. Teaching students to ask their own questions improves their active processing of text and their comprehension. By generating questions, students become aware of whether or not they understand what they are reading. They learn to ask themselves questions that require them to integrate information from different segments of text (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Readers are often coaxed into reading through *mental imagery*. Mental imaging includes using one's senses and emotions. Connecting to emotions and senses helps readers develop comprehension by making personal associations. Smelling the chocolate chip cookies that the author writes about may propel readers to continue reading. Readers are able to apply this knowledge and make comparisons on the basis of mental images and emotions (Ketch, 2005). Young readers who visualize during reading understand and remember what they read better than readers who do not use imagery (Arbruster et al., 2001).

Another key strategy in developing comprehension is to *determine importance*. Readers sort through passages remembering important information and discard the non-significant. Students are many times surprised to find that everything in print is not equally important. Conversation about what is important helps students to sort through all the hierarchy of information presented in text (Ketch, 2005).

Using background information and personal schema readers *infer* as they read. Readers learn to analyze and differentiate data and then infer. These inferences are based on personal knowledge and the information found in the text (Ketch, 2005).

As readers read, they *retell and synthesize*. In retelling, one states the key points or events in the text. Synthesizing is a more advanced skill. It involves retelling, analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, inferring, and linking to personal knowledge and experiences. This strategy leads to a deeper understanding than what is found from literal interpretation of the words (Ketch, 2005). Research has shown that one of the most important components of this strategy is that of summarizing. Summaries can be described as oral, written, or visual statements that capture

the important ideas from a text in an abbreviated form. A good example would be the use of semantic webs or venn diagrams (Neufeld, 2005).

*Fix-Up Strategies* are used to monitor meaning while reading. Readers may reread a passage, place a finger under a difficult part, subvocalize, or use picture clues (Ketch, 2005). Students who are good at monitoring their comprehension know when they understand what they read and when they do not. Research shows that instruction, even in the early grades, can help students become better at monitoring their comprehension. Comprehension monitoring instruction teaches students the following: to be aware of what they do understand, to identify what they do not understand, and to use appropriate “fix-up strategies” to resolve problems in comprehension (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Research has stated the importance of cognitive strategies in building comprehension. It has also shown the importance of oral reading in fostering comprehension. One study reported that by listening to their teacher read aloud to them over the course of a school year, students achieved greater gains in vocabulary and comprehension skills than students who had not been read to regularly by their teacher. The positive effects of read alouds were significant even among the lowest achieving students (Rasinski, 2003).

When readers comprehend, they use many strategies continuously and simultaneously. Students need opportunities to practice using these strategies in authentic ways. Teachers should consider the following when teaching comprehension strategies:

- Modeling
- Being explicit about what students should do
- Sequencing activities so that students learn skills systematically
- Providing multiple opportunities for student practice
- Providing feedback so students practice strategies correctly
- Providing opportunities to develop and expand vocabulary (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004)

Another important contribution that teachers can make towards comprehension development is that of awareness and support. Supporting comprehension throughout the school year is very important. Once the teacher has implemented strong reading strategies, it is important that the students are given ample opportunities to read. Classroom libraries should be composed of various types of literature. Examples of narrative and expository texts should be displayed (Armstrong, 2006).

In summary, comprehension is the active process of constructing meaning from text; it involves accessing

previous knowledge, understanding vocabulary and concepts, making inferences, and linking key ideas. Comprehension cannot be learned through rote instruction, but requires a series of strategies that influence understanding of text. It is this understanding of text that remains to be the ultimate goal of reading (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

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