

Welcome

LEARNS Webinar: Building Youth Literacy in Mentoring Programs

March 6, 2007

To connect to the audio portion of this Webinar:

1. Dial 1-866-330-1200 (toll free)
2. Enter the pass code 899-5060, then press the “#” key

Please join the discussion in progress:

What are your memories of being enthusiastic about reading or writing as a teen?

(Formal welcome will come at session start)



LEARNS Webinar: Building Youth Literacy in Mentoring Programs

Presented by
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LEARNS



Time: Approximately 60 minutes

Purpose: To suggest ways that lay persons (mentors and youth volunteers) can boost literacy skills in youth

Audience: Program directors, site coordinators, and volunteers in mentoring, homework help, afterschool, and other activity programs for youth, grades 5-12

Housekeeping

Please:

- Mute your phones (“Mute”, “Mic”, or *6)
 - But not “Hold” (we can hear your muzak)
 - Remember to un-mute for open-floor discussions
- Hold comments for designated times
 - You can “raise hand” on Console to let us know you have something to share
- Complete post-webinar survey that will be emailed to you

Goals for this Webinar

We hope participants will:

- Learn about statistics creating national concern about youth literacy
- Encounter a planning model for literacy needs of individual youth
- Share ideas about literacy-rich activities for mentor and youth programs
- Consider ways to provide academic coaching
- Receive resources for further learning

National Concern About Youth Literacy

Why the alarm? Statistical trends in . .

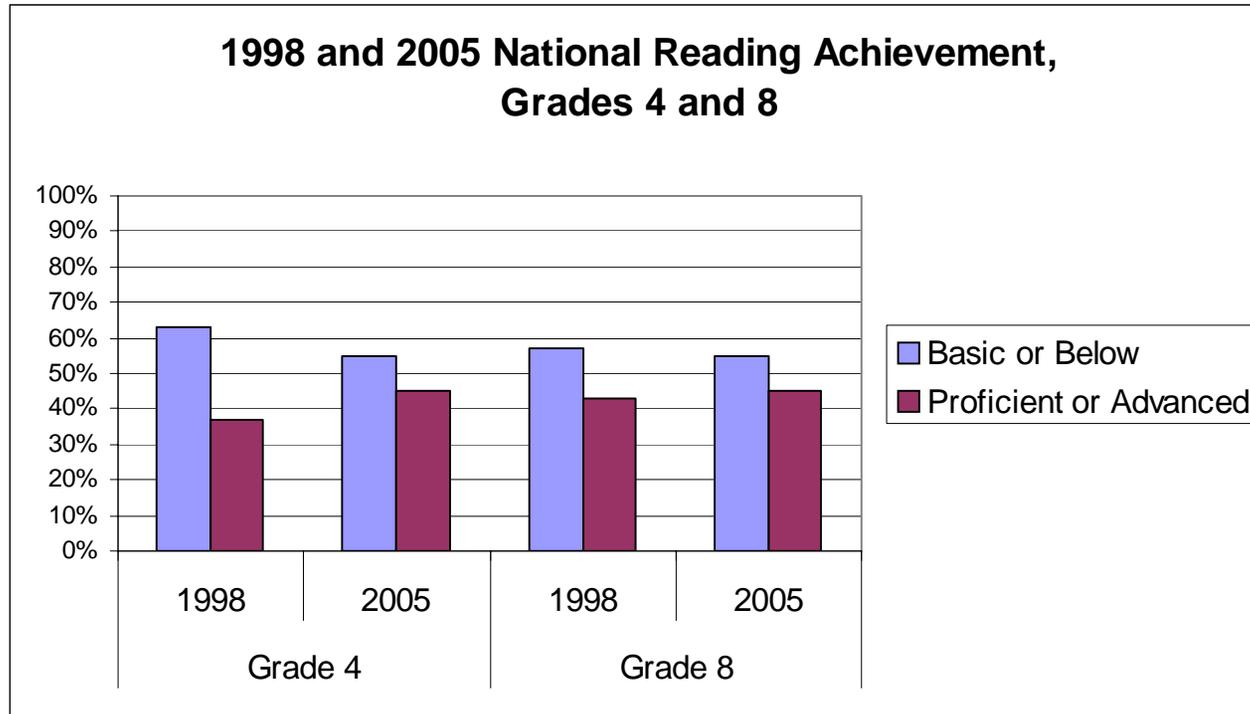
- High school completion
- Literacy levels and incarceration
- Reading achievement
- Writing achievement
- Employment practices

Literacy and School, Work, Prison . . .

- National high school graduation rates
 - Class of 1998: 71%
 - Class of 2004: 69%
- Unemployed adults
 - 75% have difficulties reading or writing
- Incarcerated persons
 - 70% score in the two lowest literacy levels
 - 49% are high school drop-outs

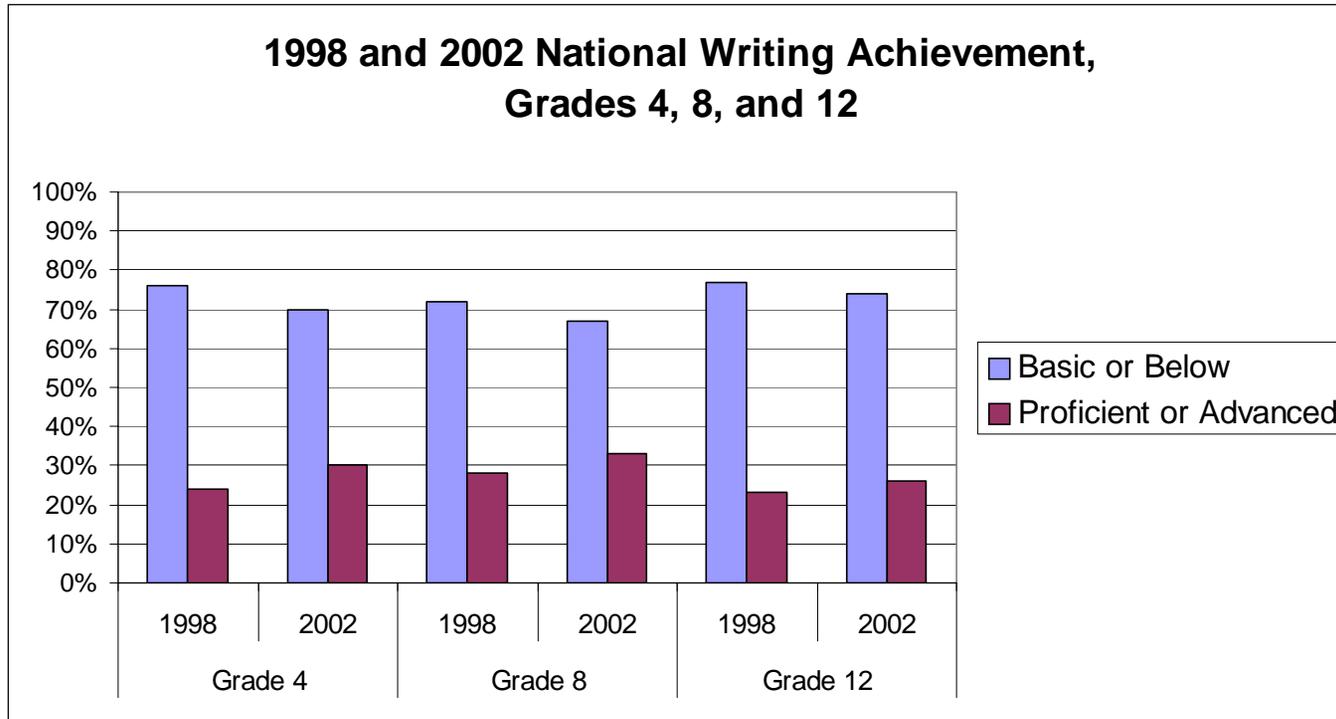
National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
National Institute for Literacy: National Survey of Adult Literacy 1992

Reading Improvement Lagging (especially in middle school)



- National results show reading scores are improving, particularly at the fourth grade level

All Students Behind in Writing

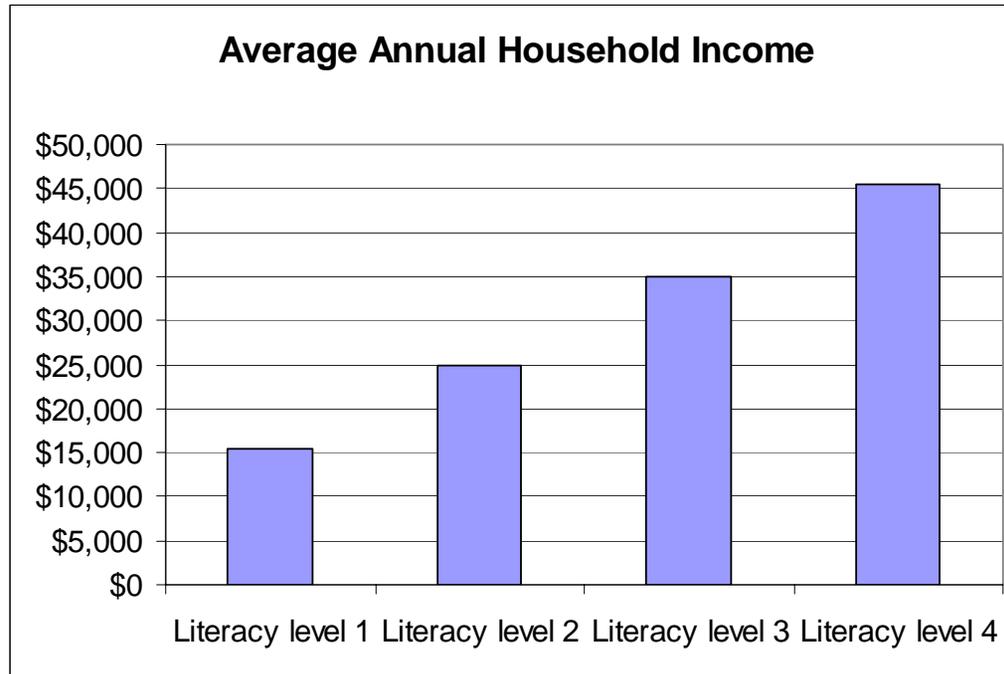


- “Almost all students lack ability to create prose that is organized, precise, engaging, coherent or convincing.”

--National Commission on Writing Report, 2006

Source: National Assessment for Educational Progress, Writing Report Card, 2002

Literacy Correlates to Higher Incomes



Source: National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992, National Center for Education Statistics

Writing Skills and Work

- 80% of salaried/professional jobs require writing skills
- When hiring, 80% of FIRE companies (finance, insurance, real estate) assess writing skills
- When hiring, government agencies assess writing for
 - 91% of professionals
 - 50% of clericals

- Reports from the National Commission on Writing - *Writing: A Ticket to Work...or a Ticket Out*, 2004;
- *Writing: A powerful Message from State Government*, 2005

Youth at Risk

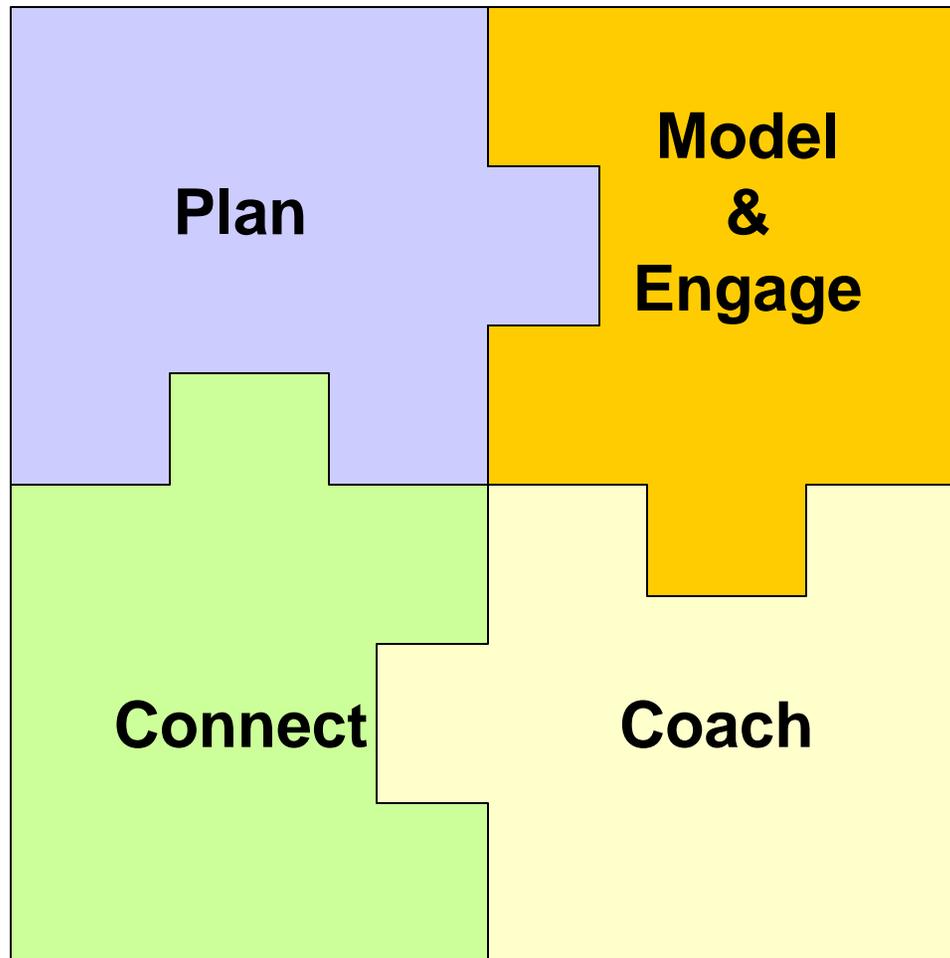
- Youth with low literacy skills are clearly at risk for:
 - Low-income jobs
 - Few opportunities for advancement
 - Unemployment
 - Even prison
- How can mentors of youth help to build literacy skills?

Break for questions

At this point...

- Do listeners have any questions or comments about the literacy picture we have looked at so far?

Literacy Support Model



Action #1: Plan

- **Plan for needs:** conduct a literacy profile
- **Plan your goals:** Target literacy support you can provide
- **Plan mutual goals:** Work with youth to identify literacy goals

Action #1: Plan (continued)

Conversations

What can you learn about:

- Reading - likes, dislikes, materials, Web sites
- Writing activities - work, school, social
- Library and computer familiarity and use
- Homework routines or on-the-job literacy tasks

Action #1: Plan (continued)

Observations

- **Speaking** - vocabulary, pronunciation, complexity, confidence
- **Listening** - attention span, retelling, summarizing, interpretation
- **Reading** - engagement, habits, fluency, comprehension
- **Writing** - organization, ideas, vocabulary, voice

Action #1: Plan (continued)

Outside Opinions/ Evaluations

- Program records
- School records
- Teachers' concerns or priorities
- Family goals and contributions
- Youth perspective on all of the above

Action #1: Plan (continued)

Set goals to meet student needs

**As a mentor, what can you do,
using...**

- Your literacy skills
- Activities in your plan
- Time available

What does your youth want to do?

- Areas for improvement
- Approaches that work
- Agreed upon outcomes

Action #1: Plan (continued)

Consider literacy tendencies of youth...(voice and choice!)

- Visually oriented
- Look for “real life” –culture, economy, age, and gender
- Inspired by media
- Focused on relationships - peers, romance, family
- Over 90% read “some” each week
(Tops is Web sites, then in order - notes/email, music lyrics, novels/stories, magazines)

- Elizabeth Birr Moje, University of Michigan, citing three interrelated research projects in Detroit, MI

Question # 1

- Are there mentoring or youth programs with us today who have developed intentional ways of planning around literacy needs of youth?
- Are you willing to share what you're doing with the group?
(please raise your hand)

Action #2: Model and Engage

Away from school, everyday experiences require vital and valuable literacy skills

- Success stories (connect to work)
- Daily routines (connect to interests)
- Social tools (connect to peers/adults)
- Pathway to learning (developing new skills)

Action #2: Model and Engage (continued)

Share stories of success

Find and tell compelling stories about...

- You and your family's literacy
- People who gain skills against all odds
- Literacy of youth icons
- Stories your youth will tell you

Action #2: Model and Engage (continued)

Literacy practice in daily routines

Shared reading and writing can develop around

- Newspapers/Entertainment Guides
- Restaurant visits
- Directions and instructions
- Computer use – email, instant messaging
- Field trips to museums
- Personal calendars and journals

Action #2: Model and Engage (continued)

Work on social tools

Verbal skills develop through many small activities --

- Active listening
- Verbal manners, etiquette
- Speaking up in groups
- Verbal games and icebreakers
- Elevator speeches

Action #2: Model and Engage (continued)

Learn new skills

- Technology
- Craft and hobby “how to” books
- Cooking
- Fashion
- Driving

Question # 2

- Can you add some “everyday” activities that can be (or already are) organized to focus on literacy skills?
- If you will share, please raise your hand)

Action #3: Coach

***Coach* youth through literacy projects (either school or out-of-school) to build academic literacy skills for...**

- Oral presentations and reports
- Listening and retelling
- Reading (assignments or pleasure)
- Writing projects

Action #3: Coach (continued)

Coaching Guidelines

A good coach...

- Recognizes effort
- Appreciates what's good
- Focuses on one improvement at a time
- Suggests different ways to get there
- Provides guided opportunities for practice
- Notices strategies that work

Action #3: Coach (continued)

Oral Presentations and Reports

Enter into the rehearsal process; be an audience when your youth is speaking and note:

- Posture/eye contact
- Gestures
- Diction and volume
- Content

Share what's effective and suggest what can be improved

Action #3: Coach (continued)

Listening and Retelling

Whether you are listening to a film, lecture, music lyric, TV, these are the skills to focus on –

- Recalling plot, details, etc.
- Highlighting main points
- Interpreting perspectives
- Summarizing content

All discussions that ask a youth to mentally review verbal content and re-verbalize it in some way will build this critical skill.

Action #3: Coach (continued)

Reading (assignments/pleasure)

Through shared reading (novels, stories, news, homework) mentors may find opportunities to improve:

- Pronunciation
- Vocabulary
- Fluency
- Comprehension

Action #3: Coach (continued)

Writing Projects

Any review of writing may offer opportunities to comment on, and encourage writing skills in:

- Voice (personality)
- Ideas
- Organization
- Word choice

**Work that leads through a process -
planning/generating/revision
will do the most to build skills**

Question # 3

- Are you representing a mentoring or youth program that focuses on academic literacy skills?
- What does the literacy part of your program look like?
- Raise your hand if you've got some examples...

Action #4: Connect

What community literacy resources can serve your youth?

- Libraries
- Community Events
- Tutoring Services

Can mentors learn about these, become a referral service?

Action #4: Connect (continued)

Libraries

Examples of what libraries have to offer:

- Teen lounges
- Computer access
- Online resources
 - Book lists and teen reviews
 - College planning guide
 - Guide to teen crisis help agencies
 - Guide to volunteering opportunities

Action #4: Connect (continued)

Community Events

Can your youth's needs be served through...

- Afterschool activities
- Neighborhood community centers
- Parks and recreation programs
- Faith-based youth groups
- Book and music store events

Action #4: Connect (continued)

Tutors

Communities often provide volunteer literacy tutors through:

- Afterschool programs
- Community colleges
- Local literacy councils
- Libraries

Question # 4

- Are there other important community resources you want to add to this list?
- Let us know by raising your hand

Resources

LEARNS provides several online resources, downloadable and suitable for training, in these areas

- Communicating with youth
- Tutoring and engaging adolescent readers
- Providing homework help
- Finding books for teens
- Find us online at www.nationalservice.gov/resources/sites/learns
- LEARNS Institute: <http://www.regonline.com/Checkin.asp?EventId=120560>

Thank you for joining us!

Please contact us with any questions...

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