

Linda Schulman Innovation Award

Electronic Reading with ELLs

Presented by Francine M. Johnson & Marc Boucher

Awarded to: Francine M. Johnson in May of 2012 at MATSOL Conference

Project was conducted in 2013-2014 academic year by:

- Francine M. Johnson, District ELL Coordinator at Peabody Public Schools (K-12)
- Marc Boucher, ESL Teacher at Greater Lawrence Technical School
- Susan Zielinski, Lead Teacher at Greater Lawrence Technical School

Objectives:

- To increase ELL students' motivation to read
- To teach students 21st century skills related to electronic reading
- To encourage students to use features such as highlighting, note taking, and looking up words on electronic devices to improve their reading comprehension

Hypotheses:

- Students will look up meanings of words more often on the nook than they would with a printed dictionary.
- Students will think it is “cooler” to read electronically. Technology will be motivating.
- Purchasing books for the nook will be much more cost effective than buying printed copies of books

Materials Needed (planning for 12 students);

- Nook simple touch for each student (12 at \$69 each)
- Nook cases for each nook (12)
- 2 nook copies of the *The Circuit* for class reading selection
- 2 copies of other book titles to be installed on nooks (1 copy per six devices)



Procedures:

- Purchase enough nooks for students
- Purchase covers
- Purchase and install titles (1 title per 6 devices)
- Give students a reading inventory to find out about their likes and dislikes as well as reading habits (before starting the reading).
- Take the nooks to be barcoded in library (metal barcode was affixed) so that nooks can be checked out to students.
- Alternate weeks of reading between printed book and nook to collect data about reading experiences with each.
- Students tally the number of times they look up a word on the nook.
- Students tally the number of times they look up a word in the dictionary while reading a printed book.
- Tally the number of times students take notes with nook and printed book.
- Tally the number of times students highlight in the nook. (They cannot highlight in books that are school property.)
- Students participate in class discussion, activities, and complete reader response journals and writing assignments and projects to interact with reading.
- Interview students & conduct survey about their experience with nooks.
- Collect & interpret data.
- Teach students (at the library) how to borrow electronic books to continue this into the future.

Findings:

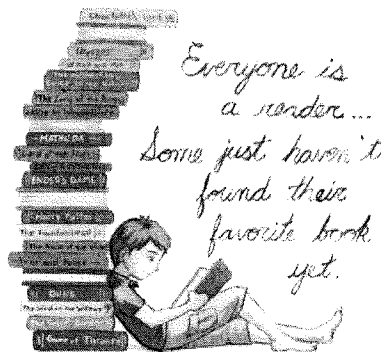
- Students enjoyed using the nooks, and they did like the “look up” feature of the nook due to convenience.
- Students did highlight in the nook, and a few of them took notes in the nook.
- Some students were afraid to check out the nook because they feared the responsibility.
- Some students appreciated that the nook is small and fits into a backpack better than a lot of printed books (keeping the bag lighter).
- In the long run, using the nook is more cost effective because one book can be installed on six devices. (Less copies needed)

Future/Continued Plans:

- Field trip to public library to learn how to borrow electronic books
- Install summer reading books onto the nooks
- Offer students the opportunity to check out the nook during the summer
- As we move towards iPads for all students, install the nook app on the iPad to continue this work

Reason for nook:

The nook has page numbers, and the kindle does not. In order to quickly review a section of reading, we thought the nook would be easier to find the exact excerpt.



Special thanks from Francine M. Johnson to:

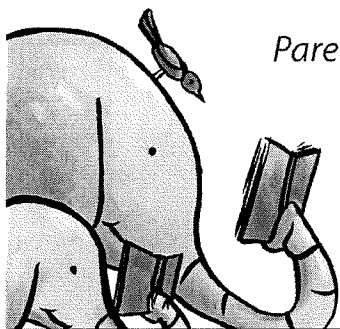
1. **Linda Schulman Innovation Award**
2. **Judith Frommer** – Advisor & Mentor for the Linda Schulman Innovation Award
3. **Dale Hollingshead** – Director of Grant Writing at Greater Lawrence Technical School
4. **Brian Addesa** – Curriculum Coordinator at Greater Lawrence Technical School
5. **Marc Boucher** – ESL Teacher at Greater Lawrence Technical School
6. **Susan Zielinski** – Lead ESL/Reading Teacher at Greater Lawrence Technical School



Questions/Comments:

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Growing readers!

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How to Read an E-Book with Your Child

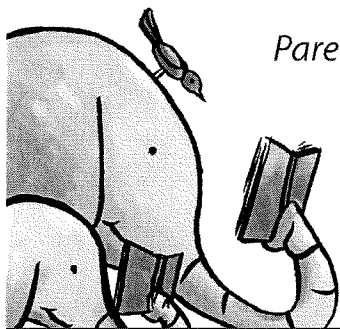
Electronic books, called e-books, are becoming more and more commonplace these days. Some readers, like the first-generation Kindle and Nook devices, offer a basic digital version of a print book. Children scroll through the pages to read, and the experience is somewhat similar to reading a traditional book.

Newer, full-color, touchscreen devices such as iPads and the Nook Color have expanded what is possible to include e-books with many more features. These “enhanced” e-books offer a different reading experience. Often bought as apps through iTunes, these e-books provide lots of choice. A user can choose have the whole book read to them, or can choose to read the book themselves. E-book enhancements consist of a range of things, but often include listening to music that complements the story, playing story-related games, completing coloring pages, and more. Most children find interactive e-books fun and engaging. But do they help develop important early literacy skills such as letter names and letter sounds or more complex skills such as comprehension?

The e-book market is too young to have enough solid research on the topic to know for sure yet, but researchers have spent lots of time watching families with young children engage with e-books. These observations suggest that it’s easy for kids to get carried away with the digital nature of the e-book. Parents can help keep the focus on reading and the story by following three simple suggestions:

1. Recognize the novelty factor. The first few times your child is interacting with a new e-book, allow time for exploration of the features. Once your child has spent some time exploring, set out to read or listen to the story without too many non-story related interruptions.
2. Enjoy the features, but don’t forget to focus on the story. See if you can help your child find a balance between having fun with the games and sticker books and really enjoying and understanding the story. As with all books, engage your reader in conversations about the story. “What do you think will happen next? What is your favorite part of the story?”
3. Stay present with your child and the book experience. It’s tempting to let the device do the work – read the story, play a game and interact with your child. But there’s no substitute for quality parent-child conversation. Keep talking, commenting on interesting words and ideas, and sharing your love of literacy with your child.

Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are national education services of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in Washington, D.C.



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Cómo leer un libro electrónico con su hijo

Los libros electrónicos, llamados e-books, se están volviendo cada vez más comunes en estos días. Algunos lectores, como la generación de 1er Kindle y el Nook, ofrecen una versión básica digital de un libro impreso. Los niños pueden desplazarse por las páginas para leer, y la experiencia es algo similar a la lectura de un libro tradicional.

Los dispositivos más recientes, a todo color, de pantalla táctil como los iPads y el Nook Color han ampliado lo que es posible incluir en los e-books y han añadido muchas más funciones. Estos e-books “mejorados” ofrecen una experiencia de lectura diferente. A menudo comprados como apps a través de iTunes, los libros electrónicos ofrecen una gran selección. Un usuario puede escoger que se le lea el libro entero, o puede elegir leerlo él mismo. Las mejoras a los libros electrónicos consisten en una gama de opciones, pero suelen incluir la posibilidad de escuchar música que complementa la historia, realizar juegos relacionados con la historia, páginas para colorear, y mucho más. La mayoría de los niños encuentran que los libros electrónicos interactivos son divertidos y estimulantes. Pero ¿en realidad, ayudan éstos al desarrollo de importantes habilidades para la lectura temprana como el aprender los nombres y los sonidos de las letras o ayudan a fomentar habilidades más complejas como la comprensión?

El mercado de e-books es demasiado joven como para que exista una suficiente y sólida investigación sobre el tema que permita saberlo a ciencia cierta; no obstante, los investigadores han pasado mucho tiempo observando a las familias con niños pequeños que interactúan con los libros electrónicos. Estas observaciones sugieren que resulta fácil que los niños se embebecan con la propia naturaleza digital del e-book. Los padres pueden ayudar a mantener la atención centrada en la lectura y la historia siguiendo tres simples sugerencias:

1. Reconozcan el factor de la novedad. La primera de las múltiples veces que su niño interactúe con un nuevo e-book, dele tiempo para explorar las características. Una vez que su hijo haya pasado algún tiempo explorando, dispónganse a leer o a escuchar la historia sin demasiadas interrupciones no relacionadas con la historia.
2. Disfruten de las funciones, pero no se olvide de concentrarse en la historia. Vea si usted puede ayudar al niño a encontrar un equilibrio entre el hecho de divertirse con los juegos y libros de etiqueta y realmente disfrutar y entender la historia. Así como lo hace con todos los libros, involucre a su lector en conversaciones acerca de la historia. “¿Qué crees que va a pasar? ¿Cuál es tu parte favorita de la historia?”
3. Manténgase presente con su hijo y la experiencia del libro. Es tentador dejar que el dispositivo haga el trabajo – léale la historia, practique un juego e interactúe con su hijo. Lo que sí es que no existe ningún sustituto para la conversación de calidad entre padres e hijos. ¡Siga hablando, comentando las palabras e ideas interesantes y compartiendo con su hijo su amor por la lectura!

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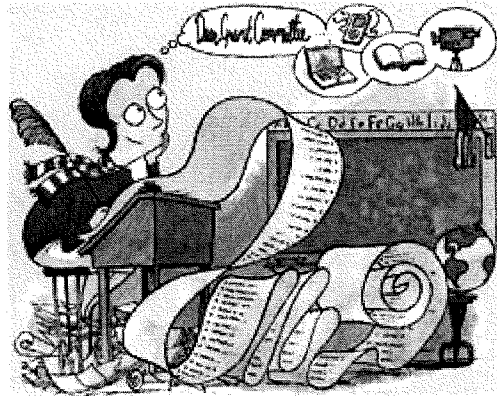


Write a Grant

Getting a grant doesn't require a Ph.D. A solid idea and a simple plan can go a long way.

By Cynthia McCabe

Educators with a plan to improve their students' learning environment often have to turn to grants. But just the thought of writing the requisite proposal sends many diving for the extra-strength aspirin. We talked to those who are well-versed in the grant game to get their suggestions for crafting the ideal pitch.



“Writing a grant is like riding a bike. Once you learn how, you’ll never forget,” says the NEA Foundation’s Jesse Graytock. He reviews the hundreds of grant applications sent each year to the Foundation, which awarded roughly \$750,000 this year through more than 80 separate grants. Here are tips for catching his attention, or the notice of government agencies, private groups, corporations, and others willing to open their wallets and help.

Be brave!

Don’t let self-doubt take you out of contention. When Nate Meyer, an eighth-grade language arts and social studies teacher in Downs, Illinois, came up with a plan to create a history-themed mini-golf course for his students, he took a deep breath and filled out an application for a small, \$300 grant from the Association of Illinois Middle Schools. To his surprise, he got it. “While this was a drop in

the bucket funding-wise, it gave me the confidence to apply for an NEA grant,” Meyer says.

Keep the writing simple

It’s a grant proposal, not a doctoral thesis. This is where many folks get hung up. “A grant should not sound like chemistry,” says Graytock. While it’s important to follow the grantee’s instructions, few will want a 25-page dissertation. Keeping it simple starts with the abstract or objective. For the grants that he reviews, Graytock wants a two- or three-sentence summary of the project. Then lay out the specifics of the program in bullet points. Don’t try to compete with J.K. Rowling on page count.

Ditto with the organization

When it comes to organizing the narrative part of your application, the authors of *Getting the Grant: How Educators Can Write Winning Proposals and Manage Successful Projects* encourage thinking like the reviewer who will be examining it. Make that person’s job easier by matching your headings and subheadings directly with the major and minor selection criteria laid out in the request for proposals. “When the reviewers can quickly and efficiently find the narrative associated with each of the selection criteria, they can happily proceed,” write the authors.

Junk the jargon

Impose a ban on “eduspeak” and unfamiliar acronyms. Nowhere in your grant should the following sentence appear: “Using a group of school-age learners, we will endeavor to capitalize on NCLB-specific requirements and shift the paradigm for meeting tangible literary and technological benchmarks.” Reviewers will be much happier to read: “We want to provide one class of third-graders the equipment needed to produce a book report podcast.”

Identify measurable points and objectives

Follow up that straightforward statement with specific, measurable goals. Action phrases like “students will demonstrate,” or “they will complete a three-segment project” are a must, Thompson says. Nebulous terms like “students will learn,” or “my class will come to understand,” aren’t specific enough when trying to explain how the project will benefit them.

Bring in other disciplines, technology

It’s a fact of life these days that no classroom is an island. Science

teachers have to work on reading skills, and social studies teachers have to add lessons on angles while teaching about the pyramids at Giza. Grantees are often looking for this type of cross-pollination, too, to get more bang for their buck. Pulling in one or two other subjects will bolster your proposal. Also, analyze your activity and determine whether there is a way to strengthen it with the use of electronics or the development of a related Web site or podcast. The technological “gee whiz” factor can go a long way with grant committees.

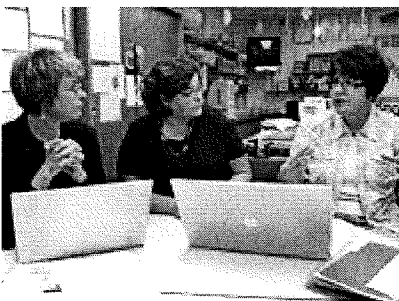
Ask for help

San Luis, Arizona, math teacher Jesus Arrizon wouldn't have considered writing a proposal until his district grants coordinator encouraged him and offered to help him apply for a grant for his program for high-risk middle school students. Coordinators can also be invaluable when it comes to carving out the time to tackle a grant proposal. Arrizon was worried that lack of time would be an issue, but “at the end of [the first grant process] I said, ‘Okay, I’m not going to let these opportunities go by,’” he says. And the help doesn't have to come from someone who's on the district payroll. When Beth Swantz, a fourth-grade teacher in Kalona, Iowa, was trying for a technology grant recently, she asked her husband—who is neither a teacher nor a techie—to read it and see if it made sense to him. Fresh eyes can scan your proposal for embarrassing typos or grammatical errors.

Beyond Candy Bars and Pizza Kits

Teachers from tiny Kalona Elementary aren't afraid to hunt down big money.

What is it about the tiny school of 250 students perched in rural Kalona, Iowa, (population, 2,293) that makes people want to give it so much money? In the past four years, teachers at Kalona Elementary have snagged more than \$1 million in grants.



Suzie Swartzendruber, Beth Swantz, and Phyllis Casper have uncanny success when it comes to earning grant money.

Photo by Mark Tade/Gazette Communications

Media specialists Beth Swantz and Phyllis Casper got a \$25,000 grant from the state and a \$5,000 grant from the NEA Foundation to teach students oral history skills through podcasting. Gym teacher Jackie Bailey and guidance counselor Nora Kehoe earned \$10,000 from the state for a program to get students eating a “mystery vegetable or fruit” every Friday and to outfit every student with custom-fitted bike helmets.

Colleagues Edye Freeman, a foreign language teacher, and Suzie Swartzendruber, a Title I reading and math and ESL teacher, landed the biggest fish of all: \$885,000 of federal grant money for two three-year programs in Chinese and Arabic. “It’s very, very unusual,” acknowledges Swantz, who is proud of the staff’s prowess.

It starts with educators’ desire to innovate, to stretch the limits of required curriculum even if it means doing the legwork to fund the extras. “Teachers like me are saying, ‘What else can I do because I’m tired of all the textbook rigamarole,’” Swantz says. “With all the testing...I had given up almost all the fun things about teaching.” She brought the fun back with a plan to get money for iPods and microphones for her students to record interviews that would ultimately become oral history podcasts (Swantz made sure her idea aligned with state standards).

A supportive administration is crucial, Kalona’s teachers say. Their former principal encouraged those who were interested to seek grant opportunities to enhance required lessons, Swantz says. Colleagues can provide invaluable feedback, too, says Swartzendruber. “If I have an idea and take it to my administrators, if it sounds lousy, they’ll let me know.”

Going for a grant isn’t limited to teachers of core subjects, says Bailey. “I knew that there are quite a number of PE grants. My problem is just finding the time to sit down and write it and know what I’m doing.” When she feels unsure, Bailey taps her fellow teachers who have more experience with grants. “We have such a community spirit here that if someone finds out about a grant, they share the information.”

Illustration: David Clark

On the Web

Turning Cache into Cash

Typing “education grants” into Google yields well over a million hits. But never fear. We've compiled some helpful sites for education grants or tips on landing them.

NEA Foundation Grants

Every year, the NEA gives teachers thousands of dollars through grants. Get deadlines and sample grant packages here. There's even an instruction video on how to fill our grant applications.

E-Grants

The feds' site requires registration, but it's free and simple (we promise), and it includes a helpful, personalized system for tracking your application package.

Fundsnet Services Online

A vast collection of links to public and corporate grants for education programs.

Learning Is for Everyone Grants and Funding

A roundup of grants from such groups as Nickelodeon television network, Best Buy, and the U.S. Senate.

School Grants

This site provides grant-writing tips and an index of available grants. Educators can also subscribe to a Bimonthly Newsletter for free. Biweekly newsletters come with a subscription cost.

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