
The mission of MPER is to prepare and motivate professional educators to assure the learning of all students.

Health Literacy for Youth: 2BYoo

Dr. Ed Morris, Center for the Advancement of Mental Health Practices in Schools, University of Missouri College of Education

On November 18, 2008, the Missouri Foundation for Health awarded the Moberly Public School District \$217,872 a two-year grant to support *Health Literacy for Youth: 2BYoo*. Access to information is a key determinant in seeking help for health issues. The purpose of the *2BYoo* project is to promote health literacy in youth by increasing access to current and accurate health information so youth can learn about their physical health, mental health, and developmental issues and make positive health decisions.

Youth require a health literacy strategy that is tailored to their unique developmental needs. Establishing a health-literate population benefits individuals, communities, and society; the earlier we can establish health literacy the longer, deeper, and more pervasive these benefits will be. However, in order to appeal to youth, health material must be concise, interesting, current, and presented in a technologically attractive and enticing format. Hence, the creation of www.YooMagazine.net.

YooMagazine has been introduced to fourteen MPER schools. MPER's reputation and prestige make its member schools ideal candidates for introducing health literacy to students, because member schools recognize MPER's leadership and expertise.

During the project's first year four schools, two middle schools and two high schools—in Moberly and Centralia—agreed to participate. After the four pilot schools customized www.YooMagazine.net to reflect their communities' cultural standards, the schools registered their students. By Spring 2009, ten additional MPER schools within the Missouri Health Foundation's service area were awarded the ability to participate in YooMagazine's Health Literacy Project, based on a competitive application process. These schools began participation in fall semester of 2009. The winning 2009 expansion schools included one Ashland middle school along with six middle schools and three high schools from the Hazelwood School District, thereby adding a total of 11,064 students to the original 701 pilot school students. The project will expand to another ten schools in fall 2010 using a

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Important Upcoming Dates

March 8	TFP Interview Day – 2010-2011 Cohort
June 15	Study Group Funding Proposals DUE
July 8	TFP Comps Day – 2009-10 Cohort
July 30–31	Governing Board Summer Retreat
September 15	Study Group Funding Proposals DUE

MPER Districts Join Leadership in Freshman Physics

Dr. Meera Chandrasekhar, Professor of Physics and Astronomy
Sarah Hill, Project Director, A TIME for Physics First
University of Missouri Department of Physics and Astronomy

A TIME for Physics First is a partnership among the University of Missouri, seven initial core partner school districts, and supporting partners. The project is by funded by a National Science Foundation grant and recruited 80 Missouri ninth-grade science teachers during Fall 2009.

Physics First is a sequence spearheaded by Leon M. Lederman (Physics Nobel Prize winner, 1988). The sequence is endorsed by the American Association of Physics Teachers, with the following rationale:

- Today's society relies more upon science and technology, so more students need to learn more science. This is crucial to both employment and to the exercise of responsible citizenship.
- A physics-chemistry-biology sequence leads the student from the simple to the complex, an approach which is in harmony with current understanding of how the brain learns.
- Understanding modern biology requires a background in chemistry, physics, and mathematics.
- Chemistry is based upon the charge structure of atoms and the forces between these charges, concepts learned in physics.
- A largely conceptual physics course starts with concrete experiences from students' daily lives, e.g., from sports, transportation, and safety. Investigating the plausibility of popular science fiction may add to the appeal.

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Physics First (Continued from page 1)

- Today, algebra classes start earlier, often in eighth grade, and support the earlier study of physics and chemistry. At the same time, real-world science applications can motivate students to learn many more mathematical tools.

The A TIME for Physics First partnership aims to build teacher leadership skills with research-based professional development that includes comprehensive physics content, pedagogy, research, and evaluation. The program includes summer and academic year experiences. Participating school districts will transition to teaching a yearlong freshman physics course. The goals of the program are to:

- Create a cadre of teacher-leaders who will become advocates for excellence in physics content and research-based pedagogy.
- Strengthen high school freshman science teachers' and students' understanding of physics.
- Enhance teachers' knowledge and ability to utilize reform-based pedagogies in teaching freshman physics.
- Promote institutional change among core partner institutions.
- Increase students' interest in science coursework in higher grades.

The three-year Summer Academy series, key to the professional development program, will be an intensive residential experience at the University of Missouri in Columbia. The academies focus on physics content integrated with pedagogy and leadership training, team-taught by physics faculty and experienced peer teachers. Academies will be four weeks long in years one and two, and two weeks in year three. Participants earn graduate credit plus receive a stipend, room, board, travel support, and a kit of materials. Summer academies will start in June 2010.

Additionally, selected teachers of mathematics from the same schools will participate in a concurrent weeklong summer academy, and school administrators attend a two-day academy, in order to provide additional support for teachers and students as they engage in freshman physics. To help participating teachers implement this challenging course in the ninth grade classroom, extensive academic year support includes professional learning communities for small-group teamwork, follow-up sessions, support from trained coaches or mentors, online peer collaboration, online access to content experts, and a materials-kit lending program.

This project is a collaboration among a group of university faculty and school district administrators, led by Meera Chandrasekhar, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Missouri. For information on the project, visit the [web site](#) or contact project director Sarah Hill at hillsar@missouri.edu or (573) 882-7997.

Study Group and Teacher Inquiry Funding

The updated application for the 2010–2011 [Study Group Proposal Program](#) has been posted to the MPER web site. Any partner building may apply for up to \$1,500 to support study groups that collaborate with an MU faculty member, graduate student, or faculty member from Moberly Area or State Fair Community Colleges. Multiple-building district projects may apply for up to \$3,000 or 50% of the combined amount for which the buildings would qualify.

On the web site, you will find the application, end-of-year reporting requirements, and examples of prior successful applications. The first due date for submission of a proposal is June 15, 2010.

For assistance in locating a faculty member for collaboration, contact [Dr. Dan Lowry](#), Co-Director of MPER.

Moberly Study Group Targets Test-Taking Skills

Della M. Bell, Principal, [Gratz Brown Elementary](#), Moberly Public Schools

The teachers at Gratz Brown Elementary in Moberly, Missouri began a book study of *Test Talk* by Melton and Greene. The book points out that often students do poorly on standardized tests not because they don't know the content, but because they are unfamiliar with the testing vocabulary and format. Within the book there are a variety of lessons that teach the structure and wording of standardized tests to help students become empowered test takers.

When the teachers began the book study, they decided to read the book chapter by chapter and select lessons to teach each week in their classrooms. Each chapter contains several lessons, however, and the teachers soon realized that reading a chapter each week did not allow them sufficient time to bring the material back to students. The decision was made to read chapters bi-weekly and meet weekly to discuss how lessons went and students' understanding of testing concepts. This format allowed for more collaboration regarding how to better implement activities.

Throughout the book study there have been many realizations about students' perceptions of standardized testing. One of the biggest "Ah-ha" moments came when students were presented with a lesson about the importance of rereading and how to use this strategy to better answer questions. Several of the students commented that they thought it was "cheating" to go back and reread material,

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Changing of the Guard – Scott Salmons presents Nicole Spencer with a plaque honoring her two years in service as Operations Council Chair. Salmons, a Jefferson City principal, assumes the role of Chair this fall. Maplewood-Richmond Heights principal Patrick McEvoy will fill the OpCo Vice-Chair position.

Health Literacy Project (Continued from page 1)

similar competitive application process. MPER school members are encouraged to watch their MPER emails for notification of the 2010 expansion process this spring.

A variety of incentives are awarded to students to encourage their registering and using YooMagazine. Additionally, participating schools receive: \$1,500 as reimbursement for reviewing the website's content to meet community standards, three iPod Shuffles per school during the two-year project, free posters and other student website enrollment materials, \$200 to support student website enrollment activities, ongoing technical support to implement the website and enroll students, and aggregated student utilization data to help teachers monitor student uptake of classroom-based health education.

“This year we’ll have a lot of students who we hope will use the website at school and at home,” said Tim Roling, a Moberly assistant superintendent. “By the end of this year we will have some pretty exciting statistics to review and share.”

MPER school members who are interested in participating in YooMagazine’s Youth Health Literacy Project in 2010 are encouraged to watch their MPER emails in early Spring 2010. That’s when emails instructing schools on how they can participate in the competitive application process will be sent out. We hope that you will pencil this exciting educational opportunity into your 2010 Day Timers now.

Moberly Book Study (Continued from page 2)

because the test says that students must not go back to previous parts of the test. The teacher quickly explained that this meant other portions of the test not the reading passage prior to questions. The teachers were shocked by this misconception and wondered how this had affected students’ scores the prior year.

As the actual reading of the book comes to an end, teachers have requested that the book study be continued during next school year. The teachers would like to incorporate the lessons into the actual Communication Arts curriculum and also include them within each grade level’s curriculum map. Teachers feel that by doing this they will be certain students encounter the lessons in a sequential manner throughout grade levels. Overall, teachers feel that this book study has helped them realize the complexity of standardized tests and the importance of teaching children how to navigate the test itself. The teachers want to make sure that this new knowledge becomes an integral part of how and what they teach each day.



***To Begin with the End in Mind means
to start with a clear understanding of
your destination.***

***It means to know where you’re going,
so that you better understand where
you are now...***

***and so that the steps you take are always in
the right direction.***

—Steven R. Covey

For Further Information

The MPER web site provides extensive information on the history, composition, and mission of the Partnership. The site also includes detailed information on programs, publications, and a calendar of events and deadlines. Answers to many of your MPER questions are just a few mouse-clicks away: <http://mper.missouri.edu/>