

Tips for Teachers

A service of ELMLE

November 2006

Inside every good teacher is an actor, bursting to get out. Think of any jazzy number from a blockbuster musical: it could have been written just for teachers – *Razzle Dazzle 'Em*, *Life is a Cabaret*, *Climb Every Mountain*, *Whenever I Feel Afraid*, even *Get Me to the Church on Time*. These sing-along numbers contain that kernel of positive energy which forms the core of every classroom, computer lab, art studio, or gymnasium. This month's **Tips for Teachers**, offered by librarian-on-sabbatical Joan Dyer-Westacott of the American School in London, asks teachers to sample her top ten books to read aloud. She also gives a few acting tips as well to help you razzle dazzle 'em. What musical show stoppers will you be humming as you plan your next read aloud session?

Tips for Reading Aloud

- Cultivate the habit of reading aloud to your class.
- Create a special time for reading aloud so that your students will not only expect to hear you read, but will look forward to your reading.
- Choose a book carefully! There's nothing worse than attempting to read a dull book, so be sure to preview your book before reading it to the class.
- Gauge how long your students are able to sit still, and don't test their limits.
- Go for the Oscar! Read with feeling and expression. Don't be timid. Change your voice, accentuate sounds. Now's the time to entertain your students.
- Encourage your students to be involved by talking about something that has happened in the book. Relate what you have read to a personal experience, and then ask your students to do the same.
- DON'T turn this time into a vocabulary or literary elements quiz.

Enjoy the novel for what it is: a great story!

- DON'T think these tips are only for English teachers! They are for everyone. If you teach social studies, find a novel that ties in to your curriculum. Are you an art teacher? There are wonderful novels for you too. Ask your librarian for help.

Joan's Personal Top Ten

Here are a few suggestions for reading aloud. But remember – you need to read the book first to make sure that you like it and that it is appropriate for your class.

For a mythology tie in, try **The Lightning Thief** by Rick Riordan

Up for a little horror? Read **Whisper in the dark** by Joseph Bruchac

For a look at historical fiction set in the plague ridden middle ages, try **Breath** by Donna Jo Napoli

Two exquisite novels-in-verse are **Dark Sons** by Nikki Grimes and **Escaping Tornado Season** by Julie Williams

For mature readers, try this book narrated by Death concerning Nazi Germany: **The Book Thief** by Marcus Zusak

A fast paced, imaginative adventure/fantasy is **Goblin Wood** by Halari Bell

For an entertaining, off beat biography, try **My Life in Dog Years** by Gary Paulson

For a great conversation starter, try this survivor story by Geraldine McCaughrean: **Smile**

If you like Classics, then a reading of an Edgar Allan Poe short story won't go amiss

A really popular read-aloud title is this fantasy by Jeanne DuPrau: **The City of Ember**

This is the second in our series of **Tips for Teachers**, brought to you by ELMLE. If you have sage advice that could improve the atmosphere of a classroom or inspire a student to excel, drop an email to alan_heath@asl.org. Ideas for future **Tips** include best web sites, the best jokes of all time, and assessment practices that really tell the achievement story. We are sure that you have other bests and favorites that you use which would be of help to colleagues across our ELMLE network of international schools.

What's coming in December? **Tips** on how to get the most out of the last two days before the Winter Break when many international students begin their vacations early in order to maximize time back home and to get cheaper flights. See how the American International School of Vienna energises its student body with music! Explore the 'crafty' way the American School of Warsaw gets staff and students working together. What does your school day to get the best from pre-holiday school days? Send your ideas to alan_heath@asl.org by November 30.

Invest in Education: Come to Zurich

The European League for Middle Level Education, invites you to participate in the annual conference, held this year in Zurich from Thursday – Saturday, January 25 -27, 2007 , at the Renaissance Hotel. Presenters are especially welcome, and are urged to contact www.elmle.org to ensure that their workshop presentations reach the conference organizers by December 1. The ELMLE conference is known for its excellent European locations, exciting cultural opportunities, and its wide variety of educational presentations. Come meet colleagues from around the world in Zurich!

We still need conference job alike chairs for the arts, social studies, science, math, and PE. Thanks to volunteers from across Europe who have already offered to chair job alike sessions for technology, English, counseling, modern language, and administration.

**THE EUROPEAN LEAGUE FOR
MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION**
21st Annual Conference

"INVEST IN LEARNING"

IN ZÜRICH SWITZERLAND
JANUARY (28) 26 - 28, 2007

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- Quality professional development in a collegial atmosphere
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- P.L.C. - Not this year - our annual opportunity

Keynote and Specialized Speakers

Mark Wiggins - "Assessment FOR Learning"

Betty Ertmer - "Differentiating Instruction"

Linda Ward - "Willing Across the Curriculum"

John Abbott of the 21st Century Learning Initiative - "Brain Research"

Mark Walcott - "Motivation"

Rob Spear (NMSA) - "Effective Middle School Practices"

Sue Swain Executive Director of NMSA (National Middle Schools Association) with David Stevens (DMS) - "Finding Common Ground"

Dr. Bernard "Schools to Watch"

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