

Pufpaff, L. A. (2011). Literacy Connection: The School Bell. Newsletter of the Division for Physical and Health Disabilities (Fall ed., Vol. 29(3) p. 10). Arlington, VA: Division for Physical and Health Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children.



Literacy Connection

Lisa Pufpaff

Sometimes the issue related to making literacy accessible to students with severe/multiple disabilities is not so much about finding alternative ways for students to access literacy materials as it is about knowing what literacy skills to teach. Teacher preparation programs for special education teachers of students with severe/multiple disabilities typically contain little instruction in teaching literacy (Pufpaff & Yssel, 2010). Special education teachers often have little or no formal training in teaching literacy skills. Therefore, some of the most useful resources to teachers can be those that address the what to teach rather than the how to teach. One of my favorite websites for getting ideas about what to teach is [The School Bell](#).

The School Bell was created and maintained by Kathy Gursky, a retired 32-year veteran of early elementary school teaching. The School Bell is sort of a one-stop shopping site for all that is early literacy from preschool to about 2nd grade. The site contains hundreds of thematic units that are full of online resources related to unit content, lesson plans, worksheets, songs/poems, assessment activities, printable materials, and interactive games/practice. Thematic units are organized by topics from AZ as well as those related to months of the year. There are also suggestions related to teaching specific skills such as word recognition, phonics, and letter names and sounds. The School Bell contains links to hundreds of websites to support teachers. This website is a valuable, time saving tool to help create or expand your early literacy curriculum.

Pufpaff, L. A., & Yssel, N. (2010). Effects of a 6-week, co-taught literacy unit on preservice special educators' literacy education knowledge. *Psychology in the Schools*, 47(5), 493-500