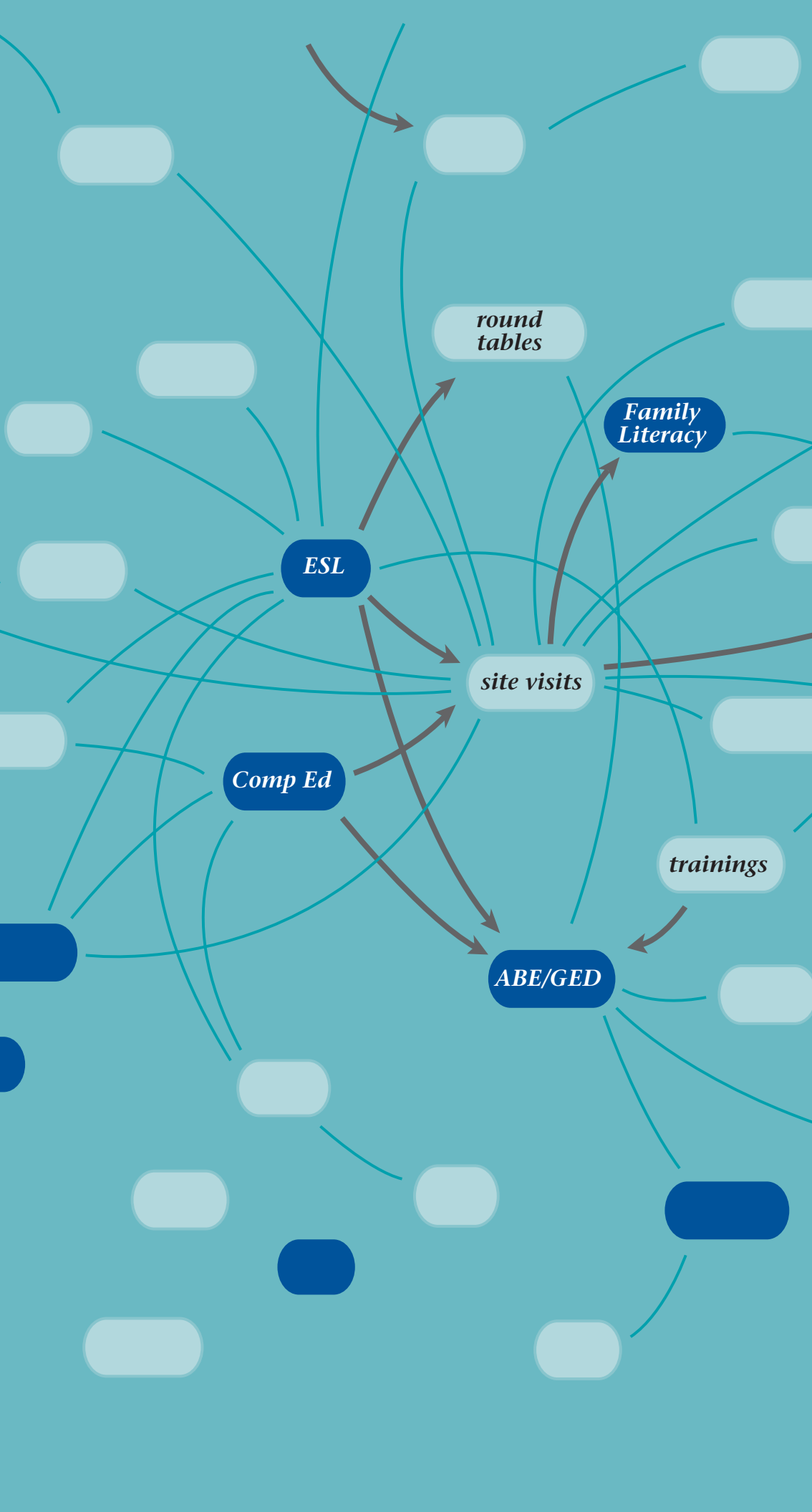


Telling the Story



2006-2007
Annual Report
on the
Training & Technical
Assistance Grant
to
Motheread^{Inc.}
from the
North Carolina
Community College
System Office



The image on the cover is of a story map, a graphic technique for creating and analyzing stories.



The words “*once upon a time . . .*”

conjure up all types of images for most of us – enchanted kingdoms, fanciful characters and happy endings – key elements of the fairy tale. But unlike these stories, usually confined to childhood, there are lots of other types we encounter each and every day – news, anecdotes, accounts, reports and jokes. Each of these and many other kinds of narratives serve important roles in our lives. This year’s report tells the story of where we went and what we learned from visiting family literacy sites across the state. It also outlines the trainings that have been conducted and their evaluations. Additionally, author Richard Krawiec has written a brief account of his experience conducting regional round tables about the value of story as a teaching and learning strategy. This year, as usual, writing down what has happened provides an important tool for reflecting as well as planning. Stories mirror our lives and cast light on what might unfold. They help us make sense of our lives. Enjoy the story of this past year.

Site Visits: What We Learned

There is no way that a person can travel around North Carolina without being struck by its geographic diversity. From the sandy beaches in the East, through the Sandhills and the rolling terrain of the Piedmont, to the massive mountains in the West, the state has a varied landscape not often seen elsewhere. Within all these differences, however, exist many similarities of spirit and character, of challenge and success among the state's residents. The same can be said of the Family Literacy/Even Start sites that were visited during this past year. While the eight sites follow the same guidelines and requirements, they also meet the needs of the diverse families they serve. Our site visits provided us with the following observations and recommendations. In terms of overall program operation, use of standardized, on-going assessment as well as effective retention and recruitment strategies was strong. However, there needs to be an increase in the use of informal assessment tools as well as more appropriate integration of the adult education and early childhood themes. The most surprising observation was that quality programming occurred regardless of the number of participants or the number of hours devoted to each component.

Observations

Adult Education

- Qualified instructors use appropriate equipment, materials, and technology to teach.
- Program staff plan and carry out instruction to maximize learning.

Recommendations

Increase the use of multi-style teaching approaches

Provide adult learners with more leadership opportunities

Parent Education

Observations

- Staff show an understanding of family context, make focused and intentional home visits, and allow students to take a leadership role in activities.
- Guest speakers and assessments are used appropriately.

Increase parenting content and facilitation skills

Increase the use of multi-style teaching approaches

Provide more opportunities for involvement at the elementary school level

Recommendations

Parent-Child Interactive Literacy

Observations

- Staff encourage play opportunities and parent-child interactions.

Include discussions to prepare parents for the session

Increase intentional and focused parent reflection opportunities

Improve ability to model/facilitate conversations and play

Recommendations

Early Childhood

Observations

- A wide variety of age-appropriate furniture, toys, materials and books is available encouraging young children to explore their environment and learn through play.
- Early childhood staff foster a learning environment that develops the whole child, encouraging age appropriate physical, cognitive, social/emotional, and language development.

Continue to develop meaningful interactions with parents

Let young children choose, plan, and implement more activities

Recommendations

Community College Family Literacy/Even Start Site Visits

Community College/Site(s)	Date
Sandhills Community College Family Literacy (Westmoore Center)	11/1/06
Central Piedmont Community College ESL Adult Family Literacy Program	12/7/06
Brunswick Community College Leland Family Literacy Center	12/12/06
Randolph Community College Early Childhood Development Center	1/25/07
Edgecombe Community College Even Start Family Literacy Program	2/15/07
Mayland Community College Avery County Even Start	4/5/07
Wilkes Community College Ashe Family Literacy	4/23/07
Surry Community College Lifespan Family Resource Center	5/2/07

Why Stories Matter

One of my favorite quotes is from Frederick Buechner, a writer who was also a minister. It says, “My story is important not because it is mine ... but because if I tell it anything like right, the chances are you will recognize that in many ways it is yours.”

Buechner goes on to say that if we were to lose track of the stories of who we are, where we have come from, and the people in our lives, we would be profoundly impoverished not only humanly, but spiritually.

We live our lives, try to understand them, through stories. Someone asks us “How are you” and we tell them a story. They listen, and usually respond with a story of their own. It is this process, of swapping stories, that helps us understand the world and our place in it. Ultimately, isn’t that what life is really about?

Writing a story is a different process from reading one. Reading is a process of analysis, of breaking things down to try to understand what someone else has said. Writing is a process of synthesis, of putting things together so you can understand what it is you wish to say.

Why do stories matter? They are how we know the world; they allow us opportunities to express our feelings and use our imaginations; they validate our lives; they connect us with others; they allow others to applaud us; they allow us to find value in each other; they help us get through the day and understand what matters most to us, and each other.

Richard Krawiec

The “Why Stories Matter” training was held all over the state through a series of family literacy round tables. Using intensive exercises, participants explored the significance of story telling and writing for themselves as a way to increase their use of stories as a powerful tool in adult education classes. The session began with activities related to oral-storytelling skills. Working in pairs, the participants in the workshops began by swapping ideas for what they might tell a story about.

They discussed different things the various characters in their stories might say, objects, places, and people they might describe. In sharing ideas for different elements of the stories they were about to tell to each other, the participants explored the basic components of ‘story’ from an oral tradition, while working towards the types of stories they could write down. They also swapped partners so they all got to hear multiple ideas for stories, which helped them both refine their own and recognize the diversity of the stories of the people in the room.

They told stories about love, heartache, and joy; about raising children, finding friends, losing loved ones; they discussed ways they’d failed, and ways they’d overcome obstacles and helped others to do so, too. The stories were about what they believed in, how and why they moved forward with their lives, the ways they found to embrace and celebrate the good in their lives, and let go of the bad.

The second half of the training focused on exploring folk tales as another type of story that can be used to help students write and interpret literature. At the end of the training, each person in the group talked about what they valued, what mattered in the stories they heard, and the ones they told. As people shared their experiences, laughing and talking, it was obvious they felt happy, connected, and validated through the seemingly simple act of listening to and telling stories. They left the training with newfound energy to give these same experiences to their own students.

Participants in Trainings & Workshops by Program Area

ABE	27
Compensatory Education	81
ESL	30
Family Literacy	101
GED	11
Literacy Council	25
Total	275

Training Schedule 2006-2007

Training	Location	Date	Average Rating	Most Frequent Rating
Motheread Institute	Greensboro	September 12-15	6.0	6
B.A.B.Y.	Raleigh	October 5-6	5.8	6
Round Table: Why Stories Matter	Marion	October 20	4.7	5
Round Table: Why Stories Matter	North Wilkesboro	October 27	5.9	6
My United States	Clinton	Nov. 30 – Dec. 1	5.8	6
F.a.t.h.e.r.	Raleigh	February 17-18	5.9	6
Round Table: Why Stories Matter	Fayetteville	February 23	5.5	5
Institute II: Story Exploring with Children	Wadesboro	March 1	5.8	6
Round Table: Why Stories Matter	New Bern	March 2	5.0	6
Institute II: Story Exploring with Children	Marion	March 9	5.9	6
Institute II: Story Exploring with Children	Lenoir	March 9	5.8	6
Institute I: Teaching Adults	Wadesboro	April 2-4	6.0	6
Institute II: Story Exploring with Children	New Bern	May 25	5.5	6
Compensatory Education Workshop	Raleigh	May 4	5.7	6
Compensatory Education Workshop	Raleigh	May 11	5.8	6
My United States	Pinehurst	May 24-25	5.6	6
Compensatory Education Workshop	Hickory	June 8	5.6	6
Institute I: Teaching Adults	Clinton	June 12-14	6.0	6
Institute I: Teaching Adults	Greensboro	June 26-28	4.8	6

Motheread® Professional Development Staff

President
Nancye Gaj

Program Director
Carolyn Dickens

Adult and Children's Literacy Specialist
Gwen Hinton

Logistics Coordinator
Cathy James

National Training Coordinator
Evelyn Machtinger

Adult and Children's Literacy Specialist
Julie Renaud

North Carolina Training Coordinator
Michele Wheeler

Motheread *Inc.*

Suite 7, 3924 Browning Place Raleigh, NC 27609 (919) 781-2088 Motheread.org