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THIRD GRADE NEWSPAPER ACTIVATES
PRIMARY LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

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by
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One of the crucial challenges facing the third grade teacher is the expectation that she will equip her students with competency in all phases of the language arts: reading, written and oral expression, listening skills and spelling. Our communication with the world we live in depends on the growth of these language skills. It is the teacher who has the responsibility of furthering the growth and quality of language performance. With these considerations in mind a newspaper unit was undertaken in the third grade. This project was selected because a newspaper, as an active and natural motivating force, would provide opportunities for many language experiences both oral and written. The creative as well as mechanical areas of writing were given an outlet. Also the newspaper was used as a tool to encourage greater scholastic achievement and fluency in the skill areas.

Many valuable social experiences were provided, besides language skills and other curriculum subjects covered in this project. In a democratic society certain skills are expected of its citizens in order that they live and work harmoniously together. The newspaper gave young citizens a sense of personal involvement in their own class community. Though there were many individual contributions, the newspaper unit was basically a group project. The third graders worked in committees, planning, sharing, writing and reporting.

The principles of creativity which pertain particularly to the language arts are discussed and attention is focused on the requisites and values of creative expression. Conditions that encourage creativity are cited. Favorable class climate, flexible schedule, teacher personality and enriching background and experiences all make their contribution.

The development of a newspaper from earliest planning stages to final printing is traced in detail. Background information and introductory material important to an orderly development of the unit are included. The plan of the class paper and the parts to be included were set up by the children under teacher guidance. The third graders decided to have a news and sports section, a part devoted to stories and poems, a humor section, television and movie reviews plus the necessary art work to illustrate the material. Staffing problems were settled and committees formed. All jobs and committee responsibilities were carefully detailed. Actual writing was done individually or by committees. Special groups took care of selecting material for inclusion in the paper, proof-reading, printing, collating the pages and final distribution.

The third grade newspaper turned out to be a satisfying and enjoyable learning experience. The class was afforded an opportunity to express itself creatively not only in writing but also in oral situations such as discussions, planning and sharing ideas. Everyone participated and showed a real interest

and an enthusiastic response. Since practice was afforded in those skills that showed weaknesses, the project appeared to be effective in providing an opportunity for children to increase and strengthen their language skills. Parental response was favorable. Both students and teacher were proud of the newspaper.