



It
Takes a
Village
to Raise a
Reader



It Takes a Village to Raise a Reader: Developing Literacy Across Generations

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Unlocking our Children's Potential: Literacy &
Numeracy as a Foundation



The Research Study

- What is Project L.O.V.E.?
- Who is involved in PL?
- Goals of the study
 - Impact on literacy
 - Impact on social development
 - Attitudes towards & Impact on seniors involved
- Methods
 - Two major Surveys
 - Two sets of Focus Groups
 - Meetings with students
 - Student drawings





Literacy Benefits from Project L.O.V.E.

- 1) Project L.O.V.E. provides a unique and meaningful extended literacy experience for elementary children where they practice and celebrate their growing literacy skills while developing positive attitudes about lifelong reading.
- 2) Project L.O.V.E. is not about “teaching children to read.” Project L.O.V.E. is “teaching children about reading,” the value and importance of reading.
- 3) Students:
 - practice their literacy skills
 - demonstrate their current skill to a caring adult
 - learn to comprehend the materials they are reading
 - generally receive reinforcement in the pleasure and importance of reading in their lives.



Social Benefits of Project L.O.V.E.

- 1) Students have an opportunity to practice basic social skills in comfortable, one-to-one, discussions with an older person who shows genuine interest and demonstrates the art of conversation.
- 2) Students and volunteers almost always develop a close bond.
- 3) Students and volunteers talk about books but also about themselves and the events of the day.
- 4) Volunteers act in ways that build or reinforce students' self-esteem as they listen, encourage and show that they care.



Benefits for Seniors in Project L.O.V.E.

- 1 The opportunity to build and experience a warm, caring relationship with children was the most frequently cited benefit.
- 2) A second significant benefit was volunteers' own literacy development. They said that they "have read more children's books than ever before." They read more themselves, learn by looking up answers to children's questions, and learn by looking up difficult words.
- 3 Volunteers create a flow between school and community that is centred on reading.
 - They affirm, for students, the importance placed on reading by the community;
 - They enlarge the community's discourse around reading, students and school;
 - They model an acceptance of community members' responsibility for all children.



Attitudes About Seniors

In their drawings and our discussions, students portrayed seniors in very positive ways.

- Seniors as accepting, caring people.
- Seniors as active people who enjoy life to the fullest.
- Seniors as a visible part of the Community.

A Montage of Children's Drawings

Implementing Similar Programs

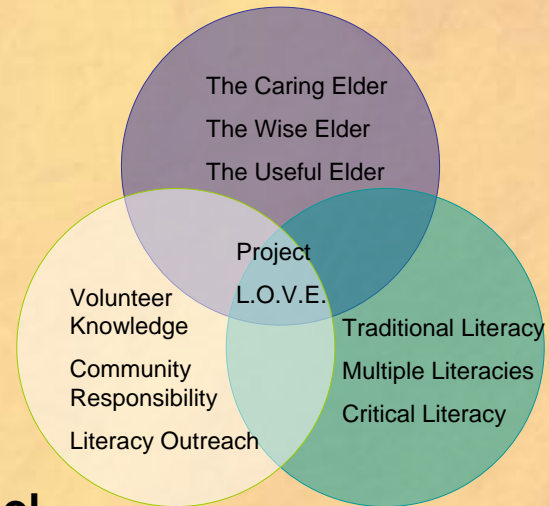
What factors facilitated the successful implementation of Project L.O.V.E.?

- School-based leadership
- Communication between the project & school
- Communication between teachers & volunteers
- Clear understanding of the literacy/social contributions of the program
- Recognition & celebration of volunteers' work



Three Themes Emerging in the Residual Data

Intergenerational Programs



**Community/School
Connections**

**Literacy
Contexts**



Intergenerational Literacy Programs

- The Caring Elder
- The Wise Elder
- The Useful Elder

Elders in the Community

This elder time becomes a stage in life revered and honoured by others and used powerfully in service and to help people do what is right for the benefit of future generations (Jenks, 2000)



Literacy for Today's Learners

- Defining a moving target
- Traditional literacy
- Multiple literacies
- Critical literacy
- Socio-cultural perspectives

Creating a Culture for Literacy

Literacy is caught as much as it is taught.



School/Community Connections

- Volunteer knowledge
- Community responsibility
- Literacy outreach

The Community in Schools/
The School in the Community

Community as the web of learning
(Abbott & Ryan, 2000)



It Takes a Village

By Jane Cowen- Fletcher

The Child in the Canadian Village





It takes a village to raise a reader

- 1) Expanding Definitions of Literacy.
- 2) Seniors as Growing Community Resource.
- 3) Involving the Community in Schools and putting the school back into the community.

Children Learn in the World.

