“The (children) who come to see us bring us their stories. They hope they tell them well enough so that we understand the truth of their lives.”

---Robert Coles, The Call of Stories

Since 1990, the School Literacy and Culture Project (SLC) in the Center for Education at Rice University has been a popular and well-respected source of professional development in early literacy throughout the Houston metropolitan area. Rooted firmly in research on the cognitive, social, and cultural factors that impact how young children become readers and writers, SLC offers a wide variety of opportunities to increase effective instruction.

**Individualized Early Literacy Mentoring**
(Paley’s Storytelling Curriculum)
Based on Vivian Paley’s work in young children’s oral language development and the role of imaginative thinking in learning, this program helps teachers use storytelling and story-acting to bridge the distance between home and school literacies. Participants in this year-long program work hand-in-hand with an experienced mentor teacher who visits the classroom twice a month to provide support and help effectively implement research-based early literacy practices. Teachers also enjoy a wide variety of active learning experiences including classroom observation visits, monthly seminars to network and discuss readings, and participation in SLC’s annual conference at Rice University.

**Cultural Conversations**
Cultural Conversations creates a safe place for teachers to talk about race, gender, and culture and their impact upon teaching and learning. In these seminars, teachers study pedagogy on biases, language differences, teacher expectations, and the power of a culturally-rich classroom. Participants also examine their own cultural identity, learn about the cultures of students in their classrooms, and share strategies they have implemented successfully in classrooms with diverse populations.

**Summer Institute on Reading, Writing, and Cultural Connections**
In this weeklong institute, teachers of young children are challenged to reframe their approach to early literacy in light of new research and practices. With a variety of experienced presenters and an emphasis on the teacher as learner, the institute provides an active learning environment where participants explore new materials, interact with other teachers, and critique new literacy practices. Our 2010 institute will be held July 12 – 18 at the Rice University Campus. A limited number of inexpensive on-campus rooms are available.

**Campus Collaborations**
This new mentoring model enables the School Literacy and Culture Project to meet the needs of individual campuses through flexible classroom demonstrations and discussion topics determined in consultation with campus teachers and administrators. Sessions may vary from as little as four weeks to work that continues throughout the school year.
Workshops and In-services
In addition to programs taking place at Rice University, our presenters are available to bring a variety of topics to your campus. A sampling of current titles is available on the SLC website. Our presenters also enjoy working with teachers and administrators to design custom topics or book discussion groups to bring to your campus.

January Mini-conference
This half-day gathering of early literacy professionals features a prominent keynote speaker and breakout sessions conducted by mentor teachers in the School Literacy and Culture Project. The mini-conference, featuring sessions for teachers of toddlers through third grade, has become known for the theoretical depth of some sessions and the practical nature of others. Past topics have included “Making Choices: Early Literacy Learning and the Craft of Teaching” and “Ten Books Every Child Needs to Know”.

Summer Creative Writing Workshops
The School Literacy and Culture Project collaborates with Writers in the Schools (WITS) to provide a three-week summer creative writing camp for kindergarten through high school students. Classes, co-taught by a classroom teacher and professional writer, are designed to help children of all ages develop a writers’ voice as they explore a variety of creative writing genres. Teacher internships that grant professional development credit are also available.

Contact information:
To learn more about The School Literacy and Culture Project, to download a brochure, or access the SLC research study referenced in today’s session, visit our website at centerforeducation.rice.edu/SLC. For general questions or to request information about presentations, please feel free to contact:

- Karen Capo - kcapo@rice.edu
- Patsy Cooper – patsy.cooper@nyu.edu
- Connie Floyd - conflo@rice.edu
- Debbie Lingrey – dlingrey@rice.edu

Join us in Houston for our annual
Summer Institute on Reading, Writing,
and Cultural Conversations.

This week-long institute will be held July 12 – 16, 2010.
Inexpensive on-campus housing is available
for a limited number of participants.

“At this time when universities are . School Literacy and Culture Project stands out as a pioneer effort and highly successful example of a well-coordinated, grass-roots integrated design. You combine a strong community identity with individual autonomy to the great benefit of the children and their teachers. Add to this your ongoing research, and the educational picture becomes a model for all.”

---Vivian Paley