

# THE UTAH SPECIAL EDUCATOR

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A woman in a red and orange dress is standing in profile, pointing with a wooden stick at a large black chalkboard. The chalkboard is covered in white cursive handwriting of phonetic words. The background is a light blue wall. The woman has a white headband and a white bag on her back.

**READING:**  
Research-based Programs  
Bring Success To Utah!

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The purpose of *The Utah Special Educator* is to serve as a medium for the dissemination of information related to promising practices and other dimensions in the provision of a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. *The Utah Special Educator* is also available in alternative formats.

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## Letters To the Editors

Controversy exists and opposing opinions or feelings are valued.

Therefore, the Editors of *The Utah Special Educator* are encouraging letters from readers related to your perspectives concerning the articles or topics in our publication.

Writers are encouraged to identify themselves, but letters will remain anonymous at the writer's request.

The Editors of *The Utah Special Educator* reserve the right to limit the number of the letters published.

# Reading:

## Practices For Student Success

### From The Editors.....

**A**s you pick up this month's issue of *The Utah Special Educator*, reading is most likely a simplistic task for you. In fact, most of us have been reading for so long that we probably take the ability to do so for granted. Unfortunately, for too many of the students we work with, reading is a difficult and arduous task.

Reading is a prerequisite for all other learning. Reading is also a skill that a significant percentage of U.S. students – including many with college educated parents – have difficulty learning (according to data compiled for the Learning First Alliance's 1998 Report). Reading problems are even more widespread among children with disabilities. The good news is that there is now a large body of research about what we must do to help these students succeed.

For the last decade there has been a renewed focus on improving the instruction for students not learning to read well. Unfortunately, most of the instructional programs have produced disappointing results (Walmsley & Allington, 1995). Oftentimes, the process is further complicated for the struggling reader by utilizing approaches to reading that are dramatically different from those offered in the general classroom setting. Therefore, most poor readers never catch up with their peers in reading abilities and, in fact, the gap between low and high readers broadens as children progress through the grades (Stanovich, 1986). As the number of students with disabilities educated alongside their nondisabled peers in general education classrooms increases, there is a corresponding need to identify research-based

practices that are appropriate for heterogeneous classrooms. Without research, professionals cannot do their jobs well. Still, even while relying on the best research available to make difficult decisions, it is important to keep two points in mind. First, wisdom, experience, and sensitivity to the needs of a particular student or group of students must temper the application of any research finding. Second, research develops over time. What seems well established today may be challenged or modified by new findings tomorrow.

In this issue, we have endeavored to share with you numerous approaches for providing reading instruction to students at risk. These research-based practices have been proven over time to provide results. We hope that one or more of these approaches to teaching reading to students at risk spark your interest. We have spotlighted a number of schools and districts and would encourage you to contact them if you would like to obtain further information about a particular strategy or approach. Enjoy! – Tracy Knickerbocker ■



**Cheryl Hostetter, Editor**  
**Tracy Knickerbocker,**  
**Co-Editor**

### On The Cover:

Reading is universal. The teaching of reading is a process no matter where and what language it is taught. The cover photo is a student learning to read in Ouelessabougou, Mali, Africa. Educators from Utah spent three weeks sharing with educators and students in twelve separate tribes in and around Ouelessabougou, related to literacy and the writing process. Photo by: Marrienne Jones, Rose Park Elementary, Salt Lake City, Utah.

# Researched-Based Reading Programs

## Currently Used in Utah



Below is a compilation of reading programs that schools or districts have chosen to use based on the unique needs of their students. We realize that this is not an inclusive list of all programs or of all schools involved in this endeavor. This is an initial attempt to assist those educators who may be researching alternative programs in an attempt to provide students the opportunity to have reading as an integral part of their lives. You may contact the individual districts for the schools involved.

### Success for All

**Overview:** *Success for All* is a comprehensive approach to restructuring schools, especially those serving students placed at risk, to ensure that every child learns how to read. It is a reading curriculum designed to provide at least 90 minutes of daily instruction in classes regrouped across age lines according to reading performance. It uses one-to-one reading tutors. It provides an early learning program for prekindergarten and kindergarten that emphasizes language development and reading.

**Districts involved:** Ogden, Salt Lake, Granite

### Cell/ExLL

**Overview:** *California Early Literacy Learning (CELL)* and *Extended Literacy Learning (ExLL)* are professional development programs designed to help elementary teachers strengthen their teaching of reading and writing. Research-based teaching methodologies are organized into a framework for classroom instruction. Cell training (PreKindergarten-Grade 3) emphasizes that the instructional focus in the primary grades is to teach reading and writing. ExLL (Grades 3-6) focuses on reading and writing in the content areas while recognizing that some children in the intermediate grades are still struggling readers.

**Districts involved:** Granite, Jordan, Provo, Uintah

### SRA/Reading Mastery

**Overview:** The primary goal of *Reading Mastery* is to increase student achievement through carefully focused instruction. In this

approach, instruction involves identifying particular skills and showing students how to apply these skills in increasingly complex situations. This direct instruction model aims to provide intense, efficient lessons that will allow all children—even the lowest performing—to master academic skills. It provides a model of instruction that emphasizes the use of carefully planned lessons, designed around a highly specified knowledge base and a well-defined set of skills for each subject. A central element of the theory underlying direct instruction is that clear instruction eliminates misinterpretations and can greatly improve and accelerate learning.

**Districts involved:** Weber, South Sanpete

### Great Leaps

**Overview:** *Great Leaps Reading* is designed to help boost the reading progress of primary grade students: beginning readers as well as those at-risk for reading failure. *Great Leaps Reading* supplements the teacher's ongoing reading to improve the reading achievement of students (including students with emotional disabilities, with learning disabilities, or students at risk of school failure.) There is also a secondary version of this program.

**Districts involved:** Ogden, University of Utah - Beth Tulbert (trainer 801-581-8443)

### Read Well

**Overview:** *Read Well* is researched-based and builds phonemic awareness. It provides systematic phonics instruction-emphasizing letter-sound recognition, conspicuous blending, recognition of word patterns, a gradual introduction to irregular words, and application of skills to multisyllable words. It integrates reading and writing, including oral and written comprehension activities. The program also integrates thematic instruction in a phonics-based program.

**Districts involved:** Weber

### Reading is FAME (Girl's and Boy's Town Reading)

**Overview:** *Reading is FAME* curriculum is a remedial program proven to dramatically increase reading levels of those in 7th grade and above. Participants learn how to diagnose students with reading difficulties and place them in appropriate classes, to use direct instruction to help students learn how to read and use their reading skills to learn and to teach students to define success in terms of how much they learn, not just how well they perform.

**Districts involved:** Granite, Box Elder, Tooele, Weber, Provo, Ogden, Uintah

### Reading for All Learners

**Overview:** *Reading for All Learners* is a supplementary reading program which supports teachers, parents and paraeducators as beginning reading instructors. Beginning readers progress through a well-defined, high success, learning sequence that includes sounds, word-attack skills, story reading and comprehensive activities.

**Districts involved:** Provo, Ogden, Uintah, Weber, Jordan, Utah State University: Dr. Alan Hofmeister, author. ■

*G'day mates. Spring has sprung! Sunlight lingers a little longer, green buds burst from nowhere, flowers materialize overnight, warm breezes bear a sweet fragrance, we awaken to an open window and the song of birds; in fact, the whole earth seems to be alive and well.*

For those of us who haven't noticed or somehow feel unaffected by this miracle maybe its time we wake ourselves up with the mindful practice of sitting meditation. Those fortunate enough to have attended January's Utah Mentor Teacher Academy Conference and participated in Rein Kaales' class on meditation, entitled Turning Your Light Inward, have a head start. We would like to thank Mr. Kaales for presenting at this year's conference and providing the inspiration for this TLC article.

Rein explained that sitting meditation was a natural technique which aids in increasing our awareness and relaxation and releasing stress. By allowing the mind to focus and become quiet, the meditator will experience greater awareness, tranquility and confidence. The regular practice of meditation has been shown to assist in overcoming addictions, hypertension, insomnia, depression, anxiety and other psychosomatic illnesses as well as increasing creativity, concentration, mental alertness and memory.

Although meditation can be done anywhere and at any time, Mr. Kaales suggested that we begin by setting aside 15 minutes a day to practice. The time should be one which is normally quiet and free of interruptions (is there such a time for teachers in the new millennium)? Early morning is often the best, however other times can be just as effective.

When practicing sitting meditation it is necessary to adjust not only your mind but also your posture and breathing. Let's give it a try.

## **STEP ONE: Body**

The first step is to assume the correct posture. Sitting on a straight back chair, gently straighten your spine so that you are sitting erect but not rigid. Feet are planted flat on the ground, hands resting in your lap, mouth and eyes closed or slightly opened. Chin is lightly tucked in to provide a feeling of strength. The correct posture will allow you to feel at ease yet alert. Every muscle should become relaxed, even the muscles in your face. The best way to achieve this is to smile gently. Go ahead! Get into this posture and give it a ride.

## **STEP TWO: Breath**

Although meditation breathing is considered "natural" it may not be the way you breathe during your hectic days. Breathing is done through the nostrils. The abdomen expanding on the inhale and contracting on the exhale (just watch a baby breathe if this description is confusing). Although you should not try to control your breathing it can be helpful to consciously take three deep breathes, with an emphasis on complete exhalation, before beginning a period of sitting. Hey, now's as good a time as any. Take three deep breathes and relax.

*Continued pg. 6*



**Jim Curtice • ULRC Program Specialist**

### STEP THREE: Mind

Concentrating your attention on breathing is an ideal mental focusing technique which can help quiet the mind by replacing mental clutter with a single object of contemplation. Once you have assumed the proper relaxed posture and have taken three deep breathes it is time to focus on the rhythm and feel of your breathing. To do this, become aware of the rise and fall of your abdomen with each inhalation and exhalation. To help focus attention begin to count each exhale, starting at 1 and ending at 10. After reaching 10 start over. If you find yourself losing count (and you will find yourself losing count believe me!) don't get discouraged, just begin again with the number 1. Don't anticipate or rush the numbers, let each one melt into the next. Go ahead – one, two, three – that's it. You can't do it wrong.

### FURTHER SUGGESTIONS:

Wearing clothes that are loose and comfortable to sit in is a good idea. If sitting indoors the room should not be too warm and a window to let in some fresh air is advisable. It is difficult to sit on a full stomach so wait an hour or so after eating. Use the kitchen timer to time your sessions so you don't have to be concerned about the time.

#### DON'T ALLOW INTERRUPTIONS!

No phones, no doorbells, no kids, no chores...no way? Come on, 15 minutes to yourself, is that asking too much? Besides, you'll be much better to be around after sitting.

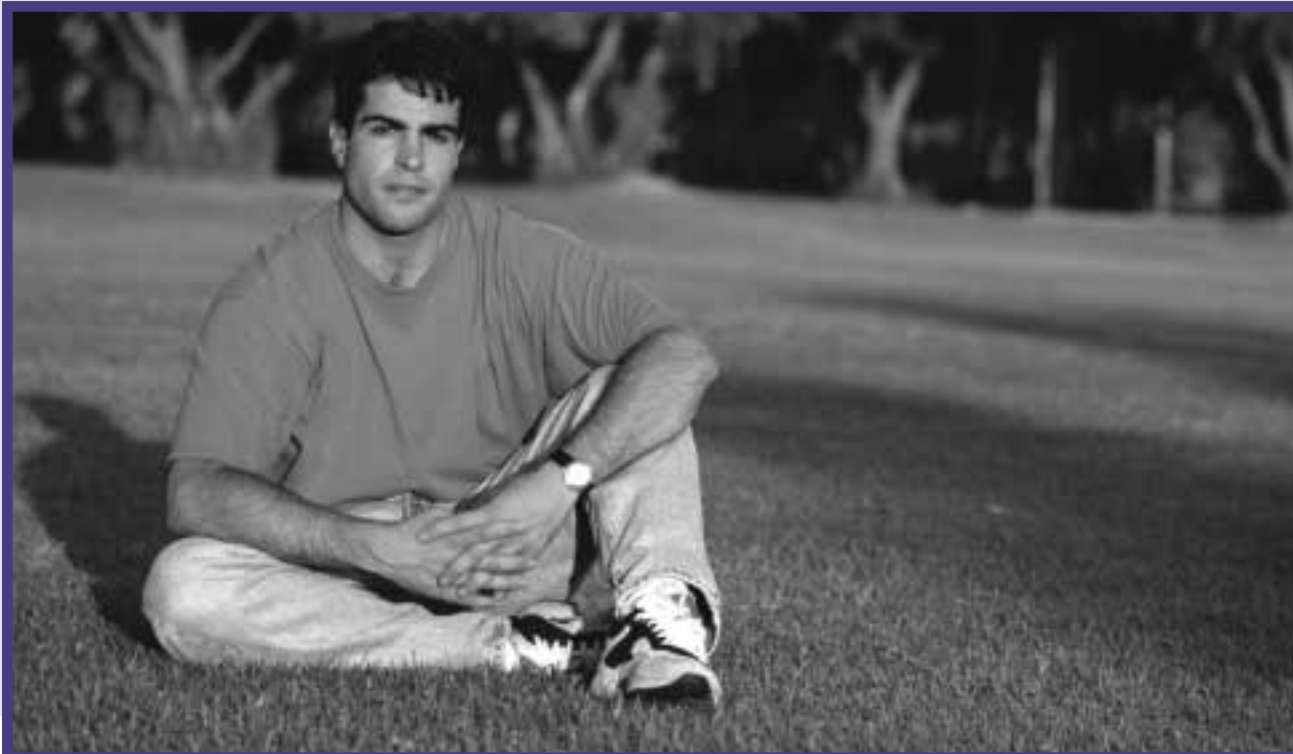
If you would like more information, your local library will have a wide variety of books, audio and visual tapes with instruction for beginners. A reminder from the September issue

of *The Utah Special Educator*: "Give it time." Commit yourself to a 15-minute daily practice for a month, or until you have awakened to the joys of the season. Your students will thank you.

This delightful art of sitting up straight and looking quietly into yourself eventually melts the frozen snow of your inner life, uncovering an awareness of limitless energy, joy, ease, gratitude and confidence. In other words, an awareness of Spring! Could Albert Camus have been right when he said there really is an eternal spring inside of each of us? You'll never know unless you look. Enjoy!  
Until next issue...

*“Sitting quietly  
Doing nothing  
Spring comes  
And the grass grows by itself.”  
–Basho*

This month's recommended reading:  
*Meditation for Kids (and other beings)*. Laurie Fisher Huck. 1996 New York. Weatherhill. Try these methods with your students to help with anger management, self-confidence and attention. ■



# National Reading Panel Reports Combination of Teaching Phonics, Word Sounds, Giving Feedback on Oral Reading Most Effective Way to Teach Reading

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**I**n the largest, most comprehensive evidenced-based review ever conducted of research on how children learn reading, a Congressionally mandated independent panel has concluded that the most effective way to teach children to read is through instruction that includes a combination of methods.

The panel determined that effective reading instruction includes teaching children to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words (phonemic awareness), teaching them that these sounds are represented by letters of the alphabet which can then be blended together to form words (phonics), having them practice what they've learned by reading aloud with guidance and feedback (guided oral reading), and applying reading comprehension strategies to guide and improve reading comprehension.

The work of this panel was guided by two unique actions. First, the panel developed a set of rigorous scientific standards to evaluate the research on the effectiveness of different instructional approaches used in teaching reading skills. Second, the work of the panel was conducted in a public forum, which allowed for public input at all of its meetings.

"For the first time, we now have guidance-based on evidence from sound scientific research on how best to teach children to read," said Duane Alexander, M.D., Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), which supports research in reading and learning. "The panel's rigorous scientific review identifies the most effective strategies for teaching reading."

The National Reading Panel was established in response to a 1997 congressional directive. Specifically, Congress asked the Director of the NICHD, in consultation with the U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley, to convene a national panel to review the scientific literature and determine, based on that evidence, the most effective ways to teach children to read. The Panel is composed of 14 individuals and includes leading scientists in reading research, representatives of colleges of education, reading teachers, educational administrators, and parents. The report, along with more information about the National Reading Panel, is available at the panel's website, <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org>.

The NICHD will undertake an aggressive effort to distribute the report and its findings to policy makers, educators, and parents. The NICHD will collaborate in these efforts with the National Institute for Literacy and the Public Libraries Association.

For its review, the panel selected research from the approximately 100,000 reading research studies that have been published since 1966, and another 15,000 that had been published before that time. Because of the large volume of studies, the panel selected only experimental and quasi-experimental studies, and among those considered only studies meeting rigorous scientific standards in reaching its conclusions.

The panel's review focused on the following areas: alphabetic (phonemic awareness and phonics instruction), reading fluency, reading comprehension, teacher education, and computer technology. Phonemic awareness is knowledge that spoken words are made up of tiny segments of sound, referred to as phonemes. For example, the words "go" and "she" each consist of two phonemes. Phonemic awareness is often confused with phonics, which refers to the process of linking these sounds to the symbols that stand for them, the letters of the alphabet. A comprehensive explanation of these two concepts is available in the NICHD publication, *Understanding Why Children Succeed or Fail at Reading*, <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/readbro.htm>.

*Continued pg. 8*



The panel found that the research conducted to date strongly supports the concept that explicitly and systematically teaching children to manipulate phonemes significantly improves children's reading and spelling abilities. The evidence for this is so clear cut that this method should be an important component of classroom reading instruction.

The panel also concluded that the research literature provides solid evidence that phonics instruction produces significant benefits for children from kindergarten through 6th grade and for children having difficulties learning to read. The greatest improvements in reading were seen from systematic phonics instruction. This type of phonics instruction consists of teaching a planned sequence of phonics elements, rather than highlighting elements as they happen to appear in a text. Here again, the evidence was so strong that the panel concluded that systematic phonics instruction is appropriate for routine classroom instruction.

For children with learning disabilities and children who are low achievers, systematic phonics instruction, combined with synthetic phonics instruction produced the greatest gains. Synthetic phonics instruction consists of teaching students to explicitly convert letters into phonemes and then blend the phonemes to form words. Moreover, systematic synthetic phonics instruction was significantly more effective in improving the reading skills of children from low socioeconomic levels. Across all grade levels, systematic synthetic phonics instruction improved the ability of good readers to spell.



The panel noted that, because children vary in reading ability and vary in the skills they bring to the classroom, no single approach to could be used in all cases. For this reason, it is important to train teachers in the different kinds of approaches to teaching phonics and in how to tailor these approaches to particular groups of students.

The panel also concluded that guided oral reading is important for developing reading fluency—the ability to read with efficiency and ease. In guided oral reading, students read out loud, to either a parent, teacher or other student, who corrects their mistakes and provides them with other feedback. Specifically, guided oral reading helped students across a wide range of grade levels to learn to recognize new words, helped them to read accurately and easily, and helped them to comprehend what they read.

By contrast, the panel was unable to determine from the research whether reading silently to oneself helped to improve reading fluency. Although it makes sense that silent reading would lead to improvements

in fluency, and the panel members did not discourage the practice, sufficient research to conclusively prove this assumption has not been conducted.

Literally hundreds of studies have shown that the best readers read silently to themselves more frequently than do poor readers, the panel members wrote. However, these studies cannot distinguish whether independent silent reading improves reading skills or that good readers simply prefer to read silently to themselves more than do poor readers. The panel recommended that if silent reading is used as a classroom technique, intended to develop reading skills and fluency, it should be done in combination with other types of reading instruction, such as guided oral reading.

To determine how children best learn to comprehend what they read, the panel reviewed studies of three areas regarded as essential to developing reading comprehension: vocabulary development, text comprehension instruction, and teacher preparation and comprehension strategies instruction.

Although the best method or combination of methods for teaching vocabulary has not yet been identified, the panel review uncovered several important implications for teaching reading. First, vocabulary should be taught both directly—apart from a larger narrative or text—and indirectly—as words are encountered in a larger text. Repetition and multiple exposure to vocabulary words will also assist vocabulary development, as will the use of computer technology. The panel emphasized that instructors should not rely on a single method for teaching vocabulary, but on a combination of methods.

Likewise, the panel also found that reading comprehension of text is best facilitated by teaching students a variety of techniques and systematic strategies to assist in recall of information, question generation, and summarizing of information. The panel also found that teachers must be provided with appropriate and intensive training to ensure that they know when and how to teach specific strategies.

With respect to the overall preparation of teachers, the panel noted that existing studies showed that training both new and established teachers generally produced higher student achievement, but the research in this area is woefully inadequate to draw clear conclusions about what makes training most effective. More quality research on teacher training is one of the major research needs identified by the panel.

Finally, the panel examined the use of computer technology to teach reading. The panel noted that there are too few definitive studies to draw firm conclusions, but that the available information suggests that it is possible to use computer technology for reading instruction. Although not directly applicable to reading instruction, the use of hyper-text-highlighted text that links to definitions or related text—may be a useful learning aid in the classroom. Moreover, the use of computers as word processors may also help students learn to read, as reading instruction is most effective when combined with writing instruction.

The NICHD is one of the Institutes comprising the National Institutes of Health, the Federal government's premier biomedical research agency. NICHD supports and conducts research on the reproductive, neurobiological, developmental, and behavioral processes that determine and maintain the health of children, adults, families, and populations. ■



# “I Have A Student Who...:”

## Responding To The Dilemmas Of Secondary Reading Instruction

Meet Aaron, a typical student served in secondary special education classrooms across all school districts. Upon review of his IEP, his Present Level of Performance reads: *Aaron is a 9th grader who wants to be a diesel-mechanic. He reads 4.0 grade level material at 115 words per minute and can answer 4 out of 5 literal reading comprehension questions on the same grade level reading material. Aaron is motivated and works hard in class to improve his reading skills. Aaron has two annual reading goals on his IEP: (1) When given 5.5 grade level reading material, Aaron will read the material at 130 wpm with less than 5 errors; and (2) When given 5.0 grade level material, Aaron will answer literal and inferential questions with 85% accuracy on 8 out of 10 trials.* Benchmarks below each annual goal will serve as the intermittent milestones to determine if Aaron is making progress on his reading goals.

Is the above scenario technically correct? The answer is “yes” (although some readers would definitely want to modify the PLEP, the annual goal(s), or both). For secondary special education teachers and their students, however, such scenarios present a three-fold dilemma-providing reading instruction at a level that the student can make progress in his special education reading class but also meet the reading demands of the general curriculum, finding instructional materials that are age-appropriate for adolescents, and using instructional strategies and techniques that will narrow the gap between students’ current ability level and their current grade level. A final factor that impacts this scenario is time. As educators, we are looking at an educational ceiling for students like Aaron. If Aaron graduates with his class, he has four more years in the public education system. This is a very limited amount of time to address Aaron’s reading needs as well as focus on the requirements necessary for graduation and the transition skills that will enable him to be a contributing member of society as an adult.

Although the answers to such dilemmas are not simple (why else would they be called dilemmas), as special educators we can make curricular and instructional decisions that will make the most of the time we have left to improve students like Aaron’s reading skills. It is this decision making process that will improve the quality of instruction for all students in secondary special education classes. Below I offer my suggestions for secondary special educators who teach students with specific reading deficits.

### **First: Identify each student’s specific reading need.**

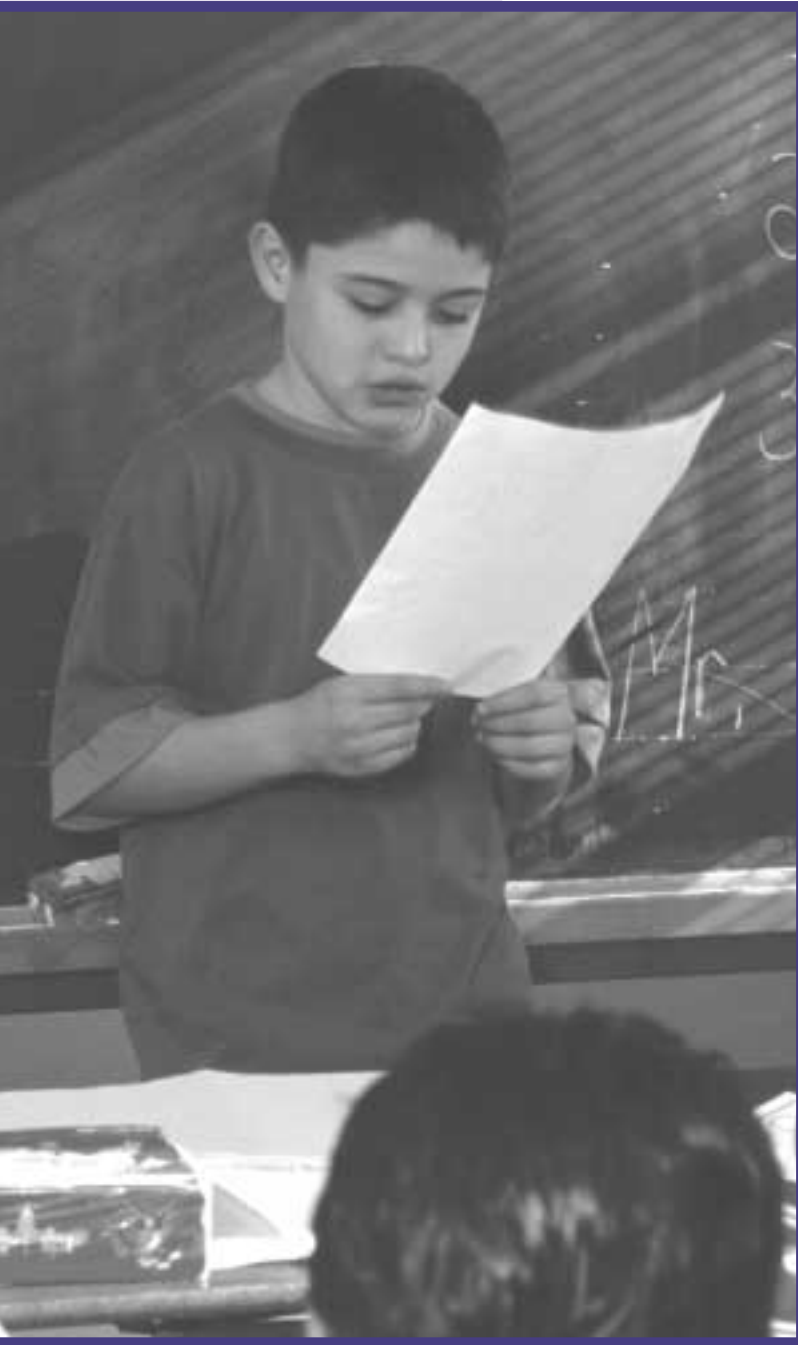
A secondary special education class may have 12 students in it who have grade level reading scores that range from 3.5 to 6.0. However, it is important to look beyond the grade level score and determine what is each student’s specific reading deficit. Is it letter-word identification, decoding, reading fluency, literal comprehension, or reading for understanding? This information can be obtained by reviewing the subtests of the student’s standardized assessments, by conducting informal evaluations, or by monitoring the student’s oral and silent reading progress in class. The important part of this process is that each student’s specific reading needs are pinpointed.

### **Second: Plan your class time to utilize effective instruction.**

Teachers are always looking for the “perfect” reading program. Unfortunately, a “one size fits all” to address the needs of all students does not exist. What all teachers have, however, is the option to use effective instruction in their classrooms. By effective instruction, I mean that during the class period, the students are engaged in learning through review of previously taught concepts, teacher-directed instruction, guided practice, independent practice, and closure to the day’s lesson.

*Continued pg. 10*

“As teachers of reading it is important to make every moment count.”



Programs such as *Boys Town Reading* or *Reading Mastery* utilize these principles, and the results that such programs get are not because they have the perfect curriculum but because they have utilized effective instructional practices. Publisher-ready programs are merely the tool to teach reading; it is the teacher's active instruction that impacts the outcome.

**Third: Maximize instructional time.** In secondary classrooms, down time for the students to begin homework, teacher-student discussions on topics not related to instruction, or the last 5 minutes off as a reward for appropriate behavior

reduces the amount of limited time that teachers have with the student to go about the business at hand-teaching reading. Consider the following: if a teacher gives a class the last 5 minutes off of a typical 45-minute class period, that computes to 25 minutes per week. This computes to 900 minutes of instructional time in a typical 36-week school year, or 20 class periods of instruction, equaling over 10 percent of the school year. The five minutes of free time will not have an impact on the student's success in life; however, being able to read better definitely will.

**Fourth: Monitor student progress based on specific need.**

This suggestion combines the three previous suggestions. Monitoring student progress by recording students' scores on reading assignments and assigning a grade based on accumulated points or percentage is one level of monitoring progress. What a grade from reading class indicates is the student's relative success in completing the assignments, packets, unit tests, etc. The grade is merely a "marker" to indicate that the student earned a unit of credit to progress toward graduation. Does it, however, measure progress on the identified reading deficits? Usually not. Therefore, during the course of planned instruction and instructional time, teachers should have a system where student's specific reading goals are monitored. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, *Great Leaps Reading* developed by Cecil Mercer is a 5-minute system that measures individual student's progress on basic decoding, phrases, and fluency. Curriculum-based assessments that monitor student progress on reading comprehension are readily available and easy to administer. What is important is to set aside regular time to monitor each student's individual progress against his/hers present level of performance.

**Fifth: Utilize the notion of "subsequent environment as attitude."** This concept implies that everything we do with students should be considered in the context of where they will likely be in the near future. The near future for students who are in secondary education includes the adult demands of jobs, independent living (to the extent appropriate), and leaving the public education system. Therefore, as teachers of reading, it is important to make every moment count. As many teachers know, there are students who may at any time drop out of school and will never return. For those students, as well as those who complete their high school education, the adult demands are the same.

Ed Kameenui states: "As reading professionals, we have imposed upon ourselves an untenable standard of always searching for the single right best method, process, or approach to literacy development and instruction ... The search for 'rightness' is not unique to reading, nor is it unique to reading educators. It seems to be a peculiar and persistent artifact of human beings, no matter what craft we possess." In light of this comment, the above suggestions are not anything new or revolutionary. What they should do, however, is serve as a reminder that in secondary special education we must remember to keep the "I" in the individualized education programs. For the Aarons in our classrooms, the effort will be worth it. ■

# Teaching Reading To Students With Disabilities On The High School Level

Tammy Salerno & Leslie Law • Transition Program • Ben Lomond High School, Ogden School District



When students with severe disabilities enter high school, the focus of their education is on vocational training, social skills, daily living skills, recreation/leisure, and accessing their community. Due to the shift in focus, we have noticed that our students' reading levels have been gradually decreasing. In order to best meet the needs of our students, we have implemented strategies to maintain and build upon current skills.

When it comes to teaching reading to students with moderate to severe disabilities on the high school level, it is important to realize that many of these students will be seeking employment within a couple of years, if not sooner. With our students who have the ability to read, we work toward having them develop reading strategies that they can use for the rest of their lives. Being able to read a job application, instructions from an employer, survival sight words, and daily written information, such as the newspaper, recipes, etc., are examples of the types of reading skills that students must continue to develop and enhance for their future.

The question is how do we go about developing such skills? We need to assess where the students are as readers. Do the students have the ability to decode words? Do the students understand what they read? At what level do the students currently read? In order to know where to begin instruction, it is important to assess each student individually in order to obtain baseline data.

This allows the teacher to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each student. The typical practice, in the past, has been to take what students don't know and begin instruction from that point. Unfortunately, by the time the students reach high school, their time-line for reading instruction is limited. Therefore, it is more important than ever to use the student's strengths to reinforce skills and to build upon what they already know. Frequent, on-going assessment is critical in planning instruction and in documenting progress of the students

In teaching reading, there are two main areas of focus: decoding and comprehension. It is important to work on decoding skills using direct

instruction. This not only ensures optimal learning, it also allows the teacher to monitor the progress of the students more accurately. We teach our students decoding strategies so they will know what to do when they come across an unfamiliar word. Some examples are to look for parts of words that they already know, and to sound out the letters in the words. We teach the students to use these strategies first, then if they are not successful, they are taught to ask someone for help.

Building skills in comprehension is the other area in which we spend significant time teaching. This is not just simply answering questions about what has been read, but it is the teaching of strategies to enhance the student's ability to construct meaning. To construct meaning is to make a connection with what is being read. Initially, we read the information to our students as they follow along, and provide them with simple definitions, if needed. This allows them to concentrate on meaning. By doing this, the students do not have to worry about decoding skills at the same time. When reading with the students, we stop frequently to discuss what has been read. Small group instruction is another way to help students stay focused and also have a chance to share what is important to them. Not only do we have the students share, we share our ideas as a way of modeling. Another strategy that we use is providing the students with response prompts to aid in remembering and generalizing information. Examples of response prompts are: "That word reminds me of...", "That is the same as...", "I can do that by..." These are just a few examples we use to provide support while working on constructing meaning.

When working with students with disabilities, it is important to provide as many visual aids as possible. For example, when teaching students to read survival sight words, such as "EXIT", "RESTROOMS", "DO NOT ENTER", or "OUT OF ORDER", we give them opportunities to locate these words in a variety of environments or settings. An example of using visual aids is pairing pictures with as many words as possible for reading recipes. This additional support assists the students in reading as independently as possible. Providing students with a variety of visual aids helps them in learning to make meaning from what they have read. The students need to use visual aids when they are first learning new information; visual aids are gradually faded until they are no longer needed.

Teaching decoding skills and comprehension skills to high school students with disabilities is challenging. Teaching strategies to help the students understand what they are reading on job applications, instructions from an employer, survival sight words, recipes, or a newspaper is one way to help make the connection that reading is truly important to them for the rest of their lives. Oftentimes students do not have an understanding about the importance of reading in their daily lives. As we work through the strategies that help them become more successful as readers, they take on ownership for their reading. It is exciting to see the connections our students make when reading for a purpose. ■

# Glendale's Search for Success In Reading

Once again you could hear the collective “thud” of the Glendale Middle School faculty’s heart as they gazed at the Standard Achievement Test scores. And yes, once again, we had achieved the lowest scores in the Salt Lake City School District. To add insult to injury, our Title I program was placed on remediation. It seemed as if we were caught in a vicious cycle with no way out!

It was at this point, 1997–1998, that Glendale’s faculty began to take a hard look at exactly what the data were saying. We found the average Glendale student began 7th grade on a 3rd or 4th grade reading level. The data also showed Glendale serves a high percentage of minority students. Added to the mix, 89% of our students were on free/reduced lunch and included a 34% mobility rate.

At that time we had two reading teachers on the faculty who pointed out that unless we addressed our reading situation, nothing else would really make any difference. Looking back, it seems strange that the rest of us hadn’t realized that maybe it was the “reading program” that needed our immediate attention. I guess we felt that somehow, if we kept doing things the same way, everything would work itself out by magic.

Once we had identified our major area of concern we began to look in the district and state for people we could use as resources. Some of our faculty visited a school, Mount Fort, in Ogden District. There, the vice-principal, Lou Anderson, began talking about the problems he and the principal had encountered when they first began at the school. We realized that we had a lot in common. Their reading scores were low and they realized that in order to help their students, a major shift needed to occur. Mr. Anderson talked about what they did to bring the reading scores up and how to get the entire faculty to participate in turning the reading problem around. As he talked, the Glendale teachers knew they had found a person who had enough passion about reading to help both the students and the faculty. We invited Lou to come to Glendale and be our mentor/coach.

During the 1998–1999 school year, we met once a month in faculty meetings to learn reading strategies. Keep in mind this is the entire faculty – not the Language Arts Department. We also began a *Breakfast Club!* We would meet at 7:15 a.m., every other week, and over bagels and juice, discuss the reading strategies that Mr. Anderson had taught and how to implement them into our classes. We began to see how reading strategies could be taught across the curriculum. However, we also realized that we needed to become more organized in how reading was taught and that in order to change our students into readers, all Glendale teachers would have to become reading teachers.



At the same time, Dr. John Bennion was assigned to our school Title I remediation team. Dr. Bennion heads the school-wide reform program based at the University of Utah. He suggested we attend one of the school-wide reform conferences and that is where Glendale teachers first heard of the *Success for All* program.

We called the *Success for All* area representatives and asked them to come and do a presentation for our faculty. We learned that *Success for All* “is a school-wide reform program designed to ensure the academic success for all students. The Reading Wings portion of *Success for All* is a product of more than 25 years of research and development on cooperative learning at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools.” Dr. Nancy A. Madden and Dr. Robert E. Slavin are the co-authors of this program. The *Success for All* program has two reading components: Older Roots and Wings. Students in the *Success for All* reading program are put into teams and the class structure is based on cooperative learning.

After this introduction, we were told that unless we had 80% of the faculty “buy in” to the program, we wouldn’t be able to use the program. Well, I am happy to report, we took the vote and we got the 80%! However, little did we know what lay ahead.

**Marilyn McMurdie • Success for All Facilitator,  
Glendale Middle School • Salt Lake City School District**

Next we had to tackle how to pay for the program. We heard that funds were available through the Utah State Department of Education. One such source of funding was the Comprehensive School Reform and Development (CSRSD). Three teachers attended a workshop on how to write a CSRSD grant. It blew us away! It seemed as if they wanted the sky, the moon, and the sun. I can remember telling Mr. Larry Peterson, our principal, that it would be next to impossible to write such a grant. And, as we all know how good principals are, he listened to our concerns and then promptly told us we could do it and to get to work. By the way, the deadline was only six weeks away!

**The Glendale faculty has been willing to invest time and effort in our reading program because they know that the future of our students depends on their ability to read.**

Well, it was written. Mrs. Carlotta Woods, a Math teacher and Mrs. Collette Cornwall, an English teacher and I literally “ate, drank and slept” that CSRSD grant. But, we did it and we received the funds. At the same time, some of the Glendale teachers were becoming excited about the prospect of being able to teach all Glendale students, at their reading level, how to become successful readers.

We had the monies to purchase the program and we knew we would have to make some changes, however, I really don't think that we were prepared for all of the changes that would occur and all that was expected. This included everyone working at Glendale, from the Principal down to the custodian. First, we changed our entire schedule from a traditional schedule to a block schedule. (One expert in the field of block scheduling said that he

couldn't help us if we didn't hire more teachers. He came from Indiana where there were over 30 teachers in a middle school of about 600 students). Another major shift came when we put our teachers into teams. Both blocking and teaming are necessary to qualify to adopt the *Success for All* program plus research has shown that they are very effective in middle schools. So, in the spring of last year (2000), we were finally ready to bring the reading component of *Success for All* to Glendale.

I'd like to say that everything since beginning *Success for All* has been wonderful. I'd like to say that it is the “cure-all” for poor readers. I'd like to say that the major changes plus implementing *Success for All* was easy. I'd like to say all of the above, but I can't. What I can say is that for the first time in ages, students collectively and individually are reading more than

ever. In addition, reading strategies are taught 90 minutes a day, five days a week, and teachers are also using the reading strategies in their specific content areas. Since all teachers are doing the same reading program we have a common goal and we are “relentless” about achieving that goal which is: “By the time a student leaves Glendale, he or she will be reading on grade level.” With 28 teachers working on that one goal, small miracles have occurred. Students who were afraid to read because they couldn't read a 7th grade or 8th grade text are raising their hand to read out loud because they are being given texts that match their reading ability level. And being taught on their ability level gives them the confidence that, indeed, they could learn to read. We are finding that negative behaviors and attitudes about school are melting away as the “Aha light” turns on.

For all of you who say the proof is in the data, here they are. This year we administered a reading assessment (The S.T.A.R. test) every 8 weeks. At the beginning of the year we had 12% of our student body reading at or above grade level. In November we had our next assessment and 16% of our students were reading at or above grade level. In January we tested again, and now 20% of our student body read on or above grade level. The average student entered Glendale last fall reading on a 5.4 reading level. At the beginning of the year over 40 of our students were reading on a first grade level or below. Today, there are no students reading below a 2nd grade level.

I think that due to *Success for All*, lots of hard work, lots of tears, lots of encouraging words (for teachers and students), and a very supportive administration, we are turning Glendale into a school of readers. Our students, some for the very first time, are learning that being a good reader has a direct correlation to being a successful student and so the disruptive behaviors are beginning to disappear. We are finding that there is a marked increase in the collegiality here at Glendale. It takes a special kind of faculty to take on so much change in one year. Every teacher has been willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure that our students become effective, successful readers. The Glendale faculty has been willing to invest time and effort in our reading program because they know that the future success of our students depends on their ability to read. ■



# SCHOOL WIDE READING IMPROVEMENT

Mark Riding • Principal, Riverton Elementary • Jordan School District



Anyone can sail downwind. The skill is knowing what to do when the wind shifts. Trying to improve the school-wide reading performance of students is like sailing in shifting winds. Competing materials and strategies, teacher training issues, scheduling, remediation, parent support, accountability and testing, district policy, etc. are like shifting winds. How is a school to navigate in such a climate?

What must be done to ensure that every child is reading on grade level by the end of third grade? What is a school faculty to do?

Over the past five years, within two different elementary schools, I've learned that a school can achieve significant improvement in students' reading ability if five actions are taken.

## 1. School-wide reading improvement must be goal #1.

Schools have no shortage of priorities. Anyone in the system very long can list the various *new priorities* which rock the system from time to time. That's why the first goal should be, and must remain, school wide reading improvement.

Well designed reading instruction includes:

- early and explicit teaching of phonetic decoding skills.
- direct teaching of decoding, comprehension, and literature.
- writing to foster and reinforce word recognition and language.
- regular and adequate time to read.

- daily exposure to a wide range of quality literature, as well as incentives for children to read independently and with others.

The schools' faculty must recognize that reading success is a K-6 goal – and that reading failure is preventable for all but a very small percentage of children. When the faculty targets reading success for all, or more students doing better work, the results are almost guaranteed. But the first step is targeting school-wide reading improvement. First comes awareness, then comes action. A school is what the faculty does.

## 2. Use End-Of-Level-Testing data to make school wide curriculum decisions.

The End-of-Level-Testing required by the USOE provides a great deal of valuable information. Data are available which can be used to make individual, grade level, and school wide curriculum decisions. At a time when everyone is demanding more testing and accountability, it makes sense for a school to use what's already available in order to "fine tune" its reading program. Review the scores with the faculty, then make curricular decisions together.

## 3. Formal, systematic reading instruction must begin in Kindergarten.

The effectiveness of Kindergarten reading instruction was documented in *Reading Research Quarterly (1995)*, "The Long-term Effects on High School Seniors of Learning to Read in Kindergarten." The results showed, "Clear, consistent, and positive differences" in groups of approximately 4000 students from 24 school districts in 10 states. When reading is taught formally in Kindergarten, groups of students require less remedial education, perform better on academic tests, and have a lower dropout rate.

Similarly, the findings of the National Research Panel (1998), in response to a Congressional request entitled *Teaching Children To Read* found “that systematic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for students in kindergarten through 6th grade and for children’s having difficulty learning to read. The ability to read and spell words was enhanced in kindergartners who received systematic beginning phonics instruction.”

At both Riverton and Edgemont Elementary, significant success was achieved with Kindergarten students using the *Reading For All Learners* program developed by Alan Hofmeister and Utah State University ([www.usu.edu/teach/read](http://www.usu.edu/teach/read)). This USOE approved supplementary reading program supports teachers, parents, and paraeducators as beginning reading instructors. A series of 150 “little books”, ranging in difficulty from Kindergarten to mid-third grade, is the key to the program. These “little books” can be used in both the classroom and at home. Beginning readers progress through a well-defined, high success, learning sequence that includes sounds, word-attack skills, story reading with high-access decodable text, and comprehension activities. We also used the *Reading For All Learners* program in **Riverton Reading Camp**, our special education resource program, and as supplementary materials in grades 1-3.

#### 4. Additional instructional time must be provided to struggling readers.

*The National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1994)* found that “some students take three to six times longer than others to learn the same thing. Yet students are caught in a time trap – processed on an assembly line scheduled to the minute. Our usage of time virtually assures the failure of many students... If we genuinely intend to give every student an equal opportunity to reach academic standards, we must understand that some students will require unequal amounts of time.”

Riverton Elementary is a year round school, so every nine weeks students go off track for three weeks. Teachers at the school decided to implement a program called **Riverton Reading Camp**. Students struggling with reading are referred by their teachers for additional help with reading and language arts during off-track times. Students receive 60 minutes a day of small group instruction from certified off track teachers. Four different one hour groups are taught – Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd Grade, 3rd & 4th Grade, 5th & 6th Grade – for two weeks during each off track break. It’s possible that a student may receive 30 additional hours of small group reading instruction during the school year.

There is no charge for the **Riverton Reading Camp**. The Jordan School District is helping us do this because we want all our students to be good readers. Parents are required to arrange transportation, make sure students arrive and leave on time, and make every effort to get the students to every **Reading Camp** session.



#### 5. Use a shotgun approach. Attack the issue from all sides.

The Utah State Board of Education, in a position statement on reading wrote, “*reading is not only the foundation of education, but the foundation for success in the workplace and every other aspect of life. Being able to read is essential for acquiring a good education, as reading is used in all content areas.*” Since reading is the foundation of education, I suggest using every tool available to insure success. School wide efforts to improve students’ reading ability require:

- Parent Volunteers. Use parents everywhere possible. Use them in the classroom and at home. Train them and reward them.
- Sustained Silent Reading. Set aside time for free reading everyday, at least 15 minutes.
- School and Classroom Libraries. Build up your school’s library. Make sure your students have too many books to read.
- Accelerated Reading. This motivational program rewards students who read more difficult books with greater comprehension. Our students love it. Rewards and Motivation. Celebrate the winners. Make sure everyone knows who’s making progress.
- Teacher Training and Inservice. Teachers love learning. Encourage teachers to engage in teacher reading groups to talk to one another about reading instruction.
- Supplementary Reading Materials. Teachers need “lots of stuff” to teach large groups of students to read. The more stuff they have in their bag of tricks the more successful they’ll be.
- Community Reading Nights. Get everyone in the community reading. Open up the schools library and invite everyone back to school to read together. Buy some donuts and encourage students and adults to read together. ■

# Do You Want Me to Sing Like a Ghost or a Magician?

Do you want me to sing it like a ghost or a magician? This question from a first grader, who had struggled for more than 1 year learning his ABCs, when asked to recite the alphabet, give the corresponding sound and a word beginning with that sound.

The teachers at W. Russel Todd School (an elementary school identified as a highly-impacted Utah school serving children from preschool to 5th grade) were expressing frustration and feeling a need to provide more individual help for many of their students. Even with Special Education and Title I support, there wasn't time to meet the needs of every child each day. After much brainstorming, extensive searching, numerous adaptations, and creative scheduling the decision to invest in the *Waterford Early Reading Program* was made.

Uintah School District has adopted the 4 Blocks Literacy approach to teaching reading. One component of the management process involves children participating in literacy centers while the teacher conducts guided reading groups. Our teachers use a portion of that time to provide the children with one-to-one tutoring on the *Waterford Early Reading Computer Program*. Using this program provides 15 to 30 minutes (depending on the level) of engaging direct instruction on their appropriate learning level reinforcing academic concepts taught by the teacher. Students use headphones to individually access the instruction. The program automatically advances each child as they master the concepts presented. Scheduling 180 students is an engineering challenge and a teacher's nightmare, but well worth the effort as you watch the excitement the growth brings to each child. All of our kindergarten, first, and second grade students access the program every day. In addition, our students in third, fourth and fifth grades, who can benefit from the instruction, are scheduled into the daily rotation. We have found that children of all ability levels profit from the visual and auditory curriculum. Because the program builds on itself and has a universally comprehensive scope the language link between teachers and grade levels is closely tied.

The most convincing aspect of the program is the response from the students. There are three levels of difficulty, each level focusing on specific reading skills. Children are taught to use computer techniques and the user-friendly program by their computer guide, Rusty Raccoon. Level I begins each day with an ABC song. There are ten versions to pick from. The first five minutes of any Level I computer session are filled with children loudly singing the alphabet (as a ghost, magician, picnic ant and more) oblivious of anyone else in the room, while their headphones insulate them from the other members of the "chorus!" and it only gets better from there. Children choose to work through recess rather than quit before their time is up. Because the information the children learn is also used similarly in the classroom and at home (through tapes and book sets), it is more quickly transferred into application. For example, we have children singing "apostrophe pig" during writer's workshop and using "sheep in the shadows" (teaches the "sh" sound) during independent reading. In addition students are motivated to advance levels. One first grader stopped teachers in the hall to announce his advancement to the next level!

Todd School encompasses a thirty-five mile area on the Uintah-Ouray Indian Reservation. Because we are a rural area, access to books and



experiences in a wide range of activities is limited. The closest public library is at best 15 miles and up to 50 miles away from some of our students. Most of our families do not have the financial resources to purchase books for home libraries. Part of the Waterford Program is a strong home component, which provides families with the materials to build a functional home library including videos, books and cassettes. By design, it structures parent-child interactions linked to the information taught in the school. In addition, the teachers use the home books in their guided reading sessions as appropriate, the "power" words (sight vocabulary words from the books) on the word walls and as flashcards to go home. Suggestions for parents in using the materials are included in the information, which goes home with each unit. We are beginning to reap the positive benefits of the ripple effect which having this information in the home has provided for the younger siblings. When a five year old child uses non-regional language in conversation by telling you that iguana starts with the letter "I", flapjacks begins with "F" and "X" is heard in fox, you know where that information came from (associations used in the Waterford Program). Many of the siblings entering kindergarten can sing several of the multi-culture songs, some even in the foreign language taught on the first set of videos!

Every year we have been adding to our equipment and refining the procedures that work best for our school. This year we have created a Waterford Computer lab and been fortunate to have parent volunteers run the lab for us. Their very presence encourages increased on-task behavior, while their immediate feedback reinforces the students' excitement as they master the concepts taught in the program.

Data documentation, of our student assessments, shows dramatic growth in areas of long standing deficits, particularly in language acquisition. Using the Speechease Test as a tool for comparison we document growth an average of 15% on the subtests from May 1994 to May 2000. The largest growth was seen in the subtest for basic concepts, rising 29%.

The *Waterford Early Reading Program* has added a new dimension to the strong teacher directed curriculum we already had in place. By coordinating the concepts taught by the teacher, with the computer instruction, many of the students who were struggling to make the needed language associations required as readers have found a way to progress more easily. Using the student materials included with the program we have been able to strengthen the academic connection not only between grade levels, but also in the home. Technology will never replace an effective teacher, but when curriculums are coordinated computer programs can reinforce instruction in ways that teachers don't have time to give. ■

**Pamela Yama • Special Education Teacher, W. Russel Todd School • Uintah School District**



# Beyond The Basics:

## Teaching Students To Read Long Words

Anita L. Archer • Educational Consultant • Portland, Oregon



**unconventionality fundamentally communication affectionate**

Would your students have difficulty reading these words? Many students in intermediate and secondary classes are hampered by their inability to read multisyllabic words. Poor decoders, even those who can decode single syllable words, often struggle with long words (Just & Carpenter, 1987). Shefelbine and Calhoun (1991) determined that low decoders pronounced fewer affixes and vowel sounds correctly, disregarded large portions of letter information, and were more likely to omit syllables. Perfetti (1986) concluded that the inability to decode long words increases the qualitative differences between good and poor readers.

There are many reasons for teaching students how to read longer words. First, word recognition is necessary, though not sufficient, for comprehension. If students are unable to read the words accurately and fluently, their comprehension will be compromised. In fact, many researchers have concluded that poorly developed word recognition skills are the most pervasive and debilitating source of reading challenges (Adams, 1990; Perfetti, 1985). In addition, if a student's word recognition skills and fluency are low, thus making reading laborious, they are unlikely to select reading as a recreational activity or to complete their class assignments.

Another important justification for teaching students to decode long words is their prevalence in intermediate and secondary level materials. Nagy and Andersen (1994) determined that from fifth grade on average students encounter approximately 10,000 words that they have never encountered in print before. Most of these new words are longer words having two or more syllables (Cunningham, 1998) and often convey the passage's meaning in content area textbooks.

### Teacher-Directed Procedure

One effective teaching procedure is to segment a word into decodable chunks and to guide students in pronouncing the word. When preteaching long words before passage reading, the teacher can segment each word into decodable parts, ask students to say each part, and then to say the entire word. As seen in the following examples, it is helpful to loop under the word parts, mimicking the finger movement that the child could use independently when reading long, unknown words.

### Student Strategy

While teacher segmenting of words is effective, students need a flexible strategy for unlocking the pronunciation of long words that can be applied independently. As an elementary student, you were probably taught a set of syllabication rules for segmenting words. These rules are seldom taught today partially because teachers realize that the rules don't improve decoding. Actually, Canney and Schreiner (1977) found no relationship between knowing syllabication rules and successful reading.

Instead of focusing on rigid syllabication rules, the following research-validated strategy stresses the two most useful patterns found in multisyllabic words: 1) the presence of affixes in about 80% of multisyllabic words and 2) vowel graphemes (letter or letters that represent a vowel sound) in each part of a multisyllabic words.

### Overt Strategy

1. Circle the word parts (prefixes) at the beginning of the word.
2. Circle the word parts (suffixes) at the end of the word.
3. Underline the letters for vowel sounds in rest of the word.

4. Say the parts of the word.
  5. Say the parts fast.
  6. Make it a real word.
- Examples: reconstruction understanding  
(REWARDS program published by Sopris West.)

Thus, the students are taught to identify word parts at the beginning and ending of the word (prefixes and suffixes) and vowel sounds in rest of the word to assist them in segmenting the word into manageable, decodable "chunks." The students are then taught to say the parts and to say the parts fast. No decoding strategy in English will yield accurate pronunciation of every word. Instead, the goal is to get a close approximation to the actual pronunciation and to correct that pronunciation using oral-aural language and the context.

Since students would not be expected to actually stop their reading and circle word parts and underline vowels, the circling and underlining behaviors must be gradually faded. In the end, students would use the following steps:

### Covert Strategy

1. Look for word parts at the beginning and end of the word and vowel sounds in rest of the word.
2. Say the parts of the word.
3. Say the parts fast.
4. Make it a real word. (REWARDS program published by Sopris West.)

As you would expect, many students would have difficulty learning this strategy not because of the strategy complexity, but rather because of unknown preskills. In order to apply these strategies, the students must be able to:

- a. Say the correct vowel sound (phoneme) when shown the corresponding letters (grapheme).
- b. Say the sound (short sound) and name (long sound) for single vowel letters.
- c. Say the correct pronunciation for common prefixes and suffixes (referred to as word parts at the beginning and ending of words).
- d. Blend auditorially presented word parts into a word.
- e. Correct incorrect pronunciations of longer words when presented in context.

**For tables that include the most frequent affixes and vowel sounds that students will need to master, and references for this article, please visit the Utah Learning Resource Center website at: [www.ulrc.org](http://www.ulrc.org)**

### Conclusion

In the past, we often concluded decoding instruction at the end of second grade. Unfortunately, longer words are generally introduced beginning in third grade. As a result, we have many students needing strategy instruction to support the reading of long words. When this instruction is given systematically, students can gain automaticity in decoding and redirect their cognitive resources to the more critical aspect of reading, comprehension.

Note: The research-validated procedures presented in this article have been incorporated into a program called REWARDS published by SoprisWest. ■



- It takes 30 minutes daily in 1:1 instruction to raise the reading levels of at-risk kindergarten students to average levels (95% of low readers catch up). It takes 120 minutes daily to raise 4th graders with poor reading skills to those same average reading levels.

## Research on Decoding

The ability to sound out new words accounts for about 80% of the variance in 1st grade reading comprehension and continues to be a major factor in text comprehension through the grades (Foorman et al., 1997). Therefore, teaching decoding and word recognition is critical for students to become fluent readers. Many strategies for reading instruction are appropriate for teaching decoding skills to early readers (Moats, 1999): (a) phonological awareness, letter recognitions, and concepts about print allow children to learn the written alphabetic code, (b) fast and accurate word recognition allows fluency in reading text for meaning, and (c) comprehension happens when children can name words, interpret words, and employ strategies to understand what

# Developments In Research On Learning To Read

## Research on Teaching Reading

Reading difficulties are one of the most pressing problems in schools today. Research indicates that interventions in reading difficulties should begin early for several reasons (Lyon et al., 1997; Mercer, 2000):

- The assessment of kindergarten and first-grade students on the tasks of phonemic segmentation, rapid automatic naming of letters and objects, and knowledge of letter sounds takes approximately 20 minutes and predicts who will be good and poor readers with 80% to 90% accuracy.
- Preventative and early intervention programs (i.e., kindergarten and first grade) that combine phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension strategies can improve the reading skills of poor readers to average reading levels in approximately 1 year.
- If intervention is delayed until the age of 9, around 75% of these children will continue to have reading problems throughout high school.
- Children with dyslexia treated in the 1st or 2nd grade improve 82% of the time. Dyslexia treated in grades 3-5 is remediated 46% of the time.

they are reading. Best practices in phonics, decoding, and word attack (National Reading Panel, 1997) include:

- Modeling and practicing decoding;
- Teaching blending and sound-symbol links directly, systematically, explicitly, and sequentially (scope and sequence necessary);
- Including phoneme awareness in beginning lessons;
- Clarifying the identity of sounds and symbols;
- Emphasizing active, vocal reading;
- Teaching high frequency words as well as regular patterns;
- Promoting generalization, integrating skills into context, and
- Checking for fluent application.

## Research on Reading Comprehension

While decoding and word recognition skills are important building blocks for successful reading, the ultimate goal of reading is to comprehend what is read. The National Reading Panel (1999) reports that reading comprehension improves through (a) explicit teaching of specific cognitive strategies or teaching students to reason strategically when they encounter barriers to understanding while reading, and (b) teacher demonstrations of comprehension strategies until students are able to do them independently. To help students develop comprehension, teachers must systematically and explicitly teach comprehension strategies, promote metacognitive strategies, provide opportunities for in-depth discussions, and encourage authentic reading and writing activities (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000). Good comprehension instruction includes (a) ample time for reading text (to practice skills, build vocabulary, and acquire new knowledge) and (b) teacher-directed instruction in comprehension with modeling and strategies, such as summarizing. Four phases of instruction for comprehension are:

- Teacher modeling and explanation of metacognitive strategies;
- Guided practice to “guide” students to assume more responsibility for task completion. These guided sessions can occur during discussion of what the student has read with the teacher and peers;
- Independent practice accompanied by teacher feedback, and
- Application of strategies (e.g., prediction and summarizing in real reading situations). Comprehension instruction must be imbedded in text rather than taught in isolation through workbooks.



**Reading difficulties are one of the most pressing problems in schools today.**

## Research on Fluency

Speed and accuracy of letter recognition (subskill) is a critical component of reading proficiency and future growth (Adams, 1990). Research shows that rereadings result in marked improvements not only in children’s speed, accuracy, and expressions, but also in their comprehension and linguistic growth (Mercer, 2000). Rereadings not only bring the opportunity for fluency, but also gives a chance to revisit and reflect on the meanings, message and language of the text. Two main instructional practices used to teach fluency are guided repeated oral reading with systematic and explicit guidance and feedback and independent silent reading where students are encouraged to read silently on their own, inside and outside the classroom, with minimal guidance and feedback.

One program that develops reading fluency is the *Great Leaps Reading Program* (Campbell, 1995). *Great Leaps Reading Program* materials are divided into three major areas: (1) Phonics, where students develop and master essential sight-sound relationships and/or sound awareness skills; (2) Sight Phrases, where students master sight words while developing and improving focusing skills; and (3) Reading Fluency, where students use age-appropriate stories specifically designed to build reading fluency, reading motivation, and proper intonation.

The Phonics section begins with identifying sounds in isolation and students are eventually able to sound out “cvc”, “cvcc”, and “cvce” patterns, thereby decoding unknown words with a high degree of success. The Sight Phrases section has individual sight words and phrases. The stories have been designed to significantly increase reading fluency and motivate students to want to continue reading through the use of point of view, humor, rhyme, and rhythm. As students achieve goals and master pages, they advance to a more challenging page with new skills. Using the *Great Leaps Reading Program*, many students experience their first consistent reading success.

While this program focuses on increased fluency, improved reading comprehension is an essential goal of the *Great Leaps Reading Program*. Research has shown that the *Great Leaps Reading Program* strategies to improve reading speed and inflection are essential components in improving reading comprehension (Adams, 1990; Ehri, 1995; Sindelar, Monda, & O’Shea, 1990) and that this program results in significant growth in reading level and reading rates (Mercer, Campbell, Miller, Mercer, & Lane, 2000). ■

# Getting More Bang For The Buck

## Assessment Practices in Identifying Reading Disabilities

**M**ultidisciplinary child study teams work together to provide an accurate assessment of factors that might bear on a referred child's learning difficulties. An important part of that assessment is obtaining an estimate of the child's level of cognitive functioning. Cognitive assessment provides a context for the team to interpret academic achievement, social/behavioral development and other relevant developmental areas. Additionally, 49 states currently use a "discrepancy" model to establish the basis for a learning disability and subsequent special education services. Approximately two-thirds of the states, including Utah, provide specific guidelines for what constitutes a severe discrepancy between ability and achievement (Flanagan, McGrew, & Ortiz, 2000). However, the global use of intelligence tests in this manner has provided little assistance to special education diagnostic teams regarding the how and why of low academic achievement. Current research on intelligence highlights a progression from single factor to multifactor to interactive theories of cognitive abilities. Along with this progression of theories have come a

multitude of new assessment instruments and approaches to assessment. At a recent workshop sponsored by the Utah School Psychology Association and the Utah State Office of Education, Dr. Fred Schrank of Riverside Publishing Company introduced the newly revised Woodcock Johnson III (WJIII) test battery. The WJIII is based on the interactive theory of intelligence of Cattell, Horn, and Carroll.

The work of Cattell, Horn, and Carroll in the identification of multiple intelligences or abilities has identified 10 "broad band" abilities (Gf-Gc abilities) representing specific aspects of intellectual functioning. This description of intelligence, now known as the CHC (Cattell-Horn-Carroll) theory, is based on the empirical analyses of hundreds of data sets and not restricted to a particular assessment instrument. The Gf-Gc abilities initially identified by these researchers represent broad domain encompassing a great variety of behaviors within a given domain. These abilities have been empirically tied to reading and math achievement.

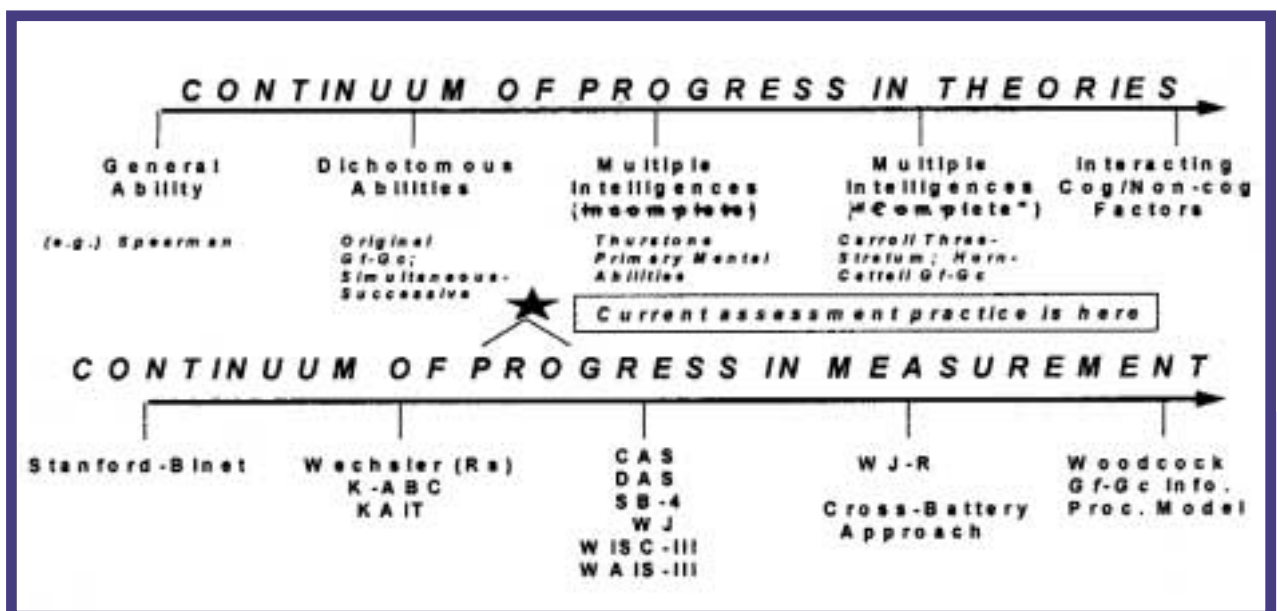


Figure 1: Progress in understanding theories of intelligence (Flanagan et al, 2000)

# HORN-CATTELL Gf-Gc THEORY

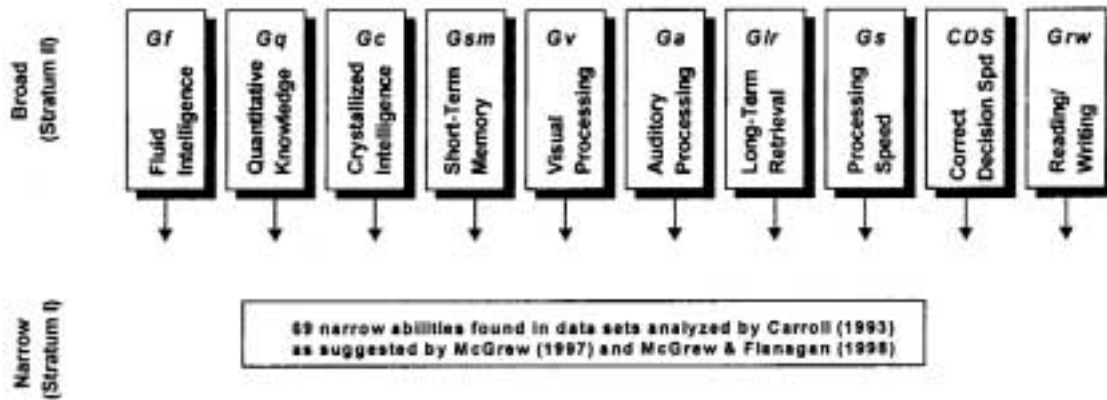


Figure 2: Broad stratum abilities constituting basis for a multifactor theory of intelligence (McGrew, K.S. & Flanagan, 1998)

By matching intellectual assessment measures to theories of intelligence that identify specific abilities associated with reading achievement and other areas, special education teams have potentially more and better information on the “why and how” of learning disabilities such as reading disabilities. Recent research indicates the following cognitive abilities have been strongly linked with achievement in reading:

**Auditory processing (Ga)** refers to the ability to receive, analyze, and blend a range of sounds. Phonetic coding or phonological awareness processing is especially important in the early elementary years.

**Long-term retrieval (Glr)** describes an individual’s ability to store a wide range of information and retrieve it rapidly using the process of association. Facility in naming or rapid automatic naming is also a critical cognitive skill for reading achievement in the early years.

**Processing speed (Gs)** refers to the ability to perform simple tasks very quickly using both attention and concentration. This speed factor is very important in reading achievement throughout all school years and particularly important in the elementary years.

**Crystallized intelligence (Gc)** includes an individual’s general knowledge base or information accumulated over time. Language development, listening ability, and “lexical knowledge” are important at all ages but become more important as the child moves from elementary school to more advanced education.

**Short-term memory (Gsm)** is especially important for reading when assessed in the context of working memory.

Assessment of these specific cognitive abilities can provide valuable information to the special education team on the nature of a child’s poor reading performance (Flanagan, McGrew, & Ortiz, 2000).

The next logical step has been to identify which standardized assessment instruments do in fact measure these specific abilities related to reading achievement. Central to this task has been the

work of Richard Woodcock, Kevin McGrew, Dawn Flanagan and others in the development of the Woodcock Johnson battery for the assessment of cognitive abilities and academic achievement. The most recent version of the Woodcock Johnson battery, the WJIII, provides special education teams with more opportunities to establish a specific relationship between a child’s assessed abilities and their difficulties in reading or other content areas. The information provided by the WJIII is especially appropriate for differentiating between intra-ability discrepancies as well as three types of ability/achievement discrepancies: general ability with achievement, predicted achievement with actual achievement, and oral language with achievement. Additionally, the WJIII cognitive ability tests allow school psychologists on the special education team to selectively administer and interpret subtests in an effort to facilitate the team’s understanding of cognitive deficits that may account for a child’s low reading level (Mather & Shrank, 2001). For example, many standardized reading achievement measures yield a global score that most likely does not provide much insight into the child’s specific reading difficulties. The WJIII allows for a more careful examination of important aspects of reading skills such as reading fluency. The WJIII cognitive assessment battery also allows further investigation into the possible reasons for the low fluency, such as weaknesses in Glr (long term retrieval) or Gsm (rapid retrieval). This may facilitate the development of more appropriate interventions. In their work on cross battery assessment, McGrew and Flanagan (1998) have provided extensive guidance in the selection, use, and interpretation of subtests from the WJIII and other measures to further assess the cognitive skills related to reading achievement.

The WJIII is a welcome albeit expensive addition to the assessment tools available to special education teams in the early and accurate identification of children with reading disabilities. The trade off for special education teams will be a more complete understanding of the process of acquiring reading skills and strategies for improvement of those skills. The challenge for Utah special educators and school psychologists lies in the integration of this new vision of assessment into current practice and the adaptation to the state’s discrepancy model. The outcome of these efforts should generate more meaningful assessments that are linked to individualized remediation strategies. ■

# Resources

## Websites:

[www.yahooligans.com](http://www.yahooligans.com)  
[www.npac.syr.edu/textbook/kidsweb](http://www.npac.syr.edu/textbook/kidsweb)  
[www.nytimes.com/learning/general/guide/html](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/guide/html)  
[www.mamamedia.com](http://www.mamamedia.com)  
[www.cyverkids.com](http://www.cyverkids.com)  
[www.cbc4kids.com](http://www.cbc4kids.com)  
[www.askanexpert.com/askanexpert](http://www.askanexpert.com/askanexpert)  
[www.lycoszone.com](http://www.lycoszone.com)  
[www.ipl.org/youth/](http://www.ipl.org/youth/)  
[www.kidsnet.com](http://www.kidsnet.com)  
[www.invent.org/book](http://www.invent.org/book)  
[www.whyfiles.news.wisc.edu](http://www.whyfiles.news.wisc.edu)  
[www.sikids.com](http://www.sikids.com)  
[www.familyvillage.wisc.edu](http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu)  
[www.ravenna.com/coloring](http://www.ravenna.com/coloring)  
[www.terraquest.com](http://www.terraquest.com)  
[www.5tigers.org](http://www.5tigers.org)

[www.ash.udel.edu/ash/challenge/challengeframe.html](http://www.ash.udel.edu/ash/challenge/challengeframe.html)  
[www.nationalgeographic.com/kids](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids)  
[www.aquariacentral.com](http://www.aquariacentral.com)  
[www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)  
[www.usoe.k12.ut.us](http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us)  
[www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)  
[www.nichey.org](http://www.nichey.org)  
[www.coled.umn.edu/nceo](http://www.coled.umn.edu/nceo)  
[www.rfbd.org](http://www.rfbd.org)  
[www.mts.net](http://www.mts.net)  
[www.fscn.org](http://www.fscn.org)  
[www.hood.edu/seri/serihome](http://www.hood.edu/seri/serihome)  
[www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)  
[www.readingonline.org](http://www.readingonline.org)  
[www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/nichd.html](http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/nichd.html)  
[www.ciera.org/ciera/](http://www.ciera.org/ciera/)

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Publications:

Effective School Practices  
Association for Direct Instruction

# FAQ's:

## Your Questions...Our Answers

The area of discipline continues to be an area where many questions come up. So this month we will concentrate on that area, as we did in the December 2000 issue.

### **Question: Can students classified as emotionally disturbed (ED) be suspended?**

**Answer:** Yes, the discipline requirements apply to all students with disabilities ages 3-21, and across all disability categories. Team members should be familiar with the discipline requirements as stated in the State Rules, beginning on page 90, so that they can be implemented appropriately.

### **Question: When suspending a student with emotional disturbance, wouldn't the behavior always be a manifestation of the student's disability?**

**Answer:** No, a team must consider each student individually, and this includes conducting a manifestation determination. Remember that a manifestation determination cannot be conducted unilaterally, but must be done by the IEP team, including the parent(s), and other qualified personnel. When conducting the manifestation determination, the team must follow the rule as outlined in V.K. of the State Rules, page 93. The team should keep a couple of questions/answers in mind as they are reviewing information regarding the student.

- 1) Did the school do what they were supposed to do? In other words, did the school follow the IEP? Was the IEP appropriate? Was the Placement appropriate? Was there a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) in place, and was it followed?
- 2) Did the student understand that it was wrong to be engaged in the behavior? Did he understand the impact and consequences of the behavior? Does the student's disability impair his ability to control the behavior in question?

### **Question: Does suspension from the bus count as a day of suspension?**

**Answer:** The standard special education answer applies here – it depends. You need to count the bus suspension as a day of

suspension if the transportation is part of the student's IEP, unless the district provides the transportation service in another way, such as a taxi. If transportation is not part of the student's IEP, then you would not count that as a day of suspension, and the parents would have the same obligation as other parents to see that the student gets to school. As a word of caution, the team should look at the bus behavior that caused the suspension, to see if it is similar to classroom behavior, and adjust BIP's and IEP's as the team sees appropriate.

Also note that there is no such thing as day or day suspensions. If any of the services, as outlined on the IEP are not provided, then the suspension counts as a full day of suspension.

### **Question: When is it required to have a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) in place?**

**Answer:** There are two specific times as outlined in both Federal Regulations, and our State Rules.

- 1) The IEP team must consider the use of a BIP "in the case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others." This can be done during the IEP meeting that is conducted at least once yearly, or at anytime a behavior pops up and meets the definition above.
- 2) Whenever the days of removal from the IEP (suspension because of disciplinary problems) add up to more than 10 days in a school year.

Remember that a BIP should focus not on what you do to the student, but rather what you will do for the student. BIP's are to be developed with these proactive thoughts in mind as outlined in our State Rules page 44 III. H. 1. b. (1) "strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address that behavior." IEP teams will soon have the revised Least Restrictive Behavior Interventions (LRBI) to refer to in developing these proactive strategies. ■



**Brenda Broadbent • Specialist • Utah State Office of Education**



# A Review Of The Current Research On Effective Reading Interventions For Students With Emotional Disorders

Mishelle Carroll • BEST Project

## The Research

In a literature review entitled, *Reading Interventions for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders* by Coleman and Vaughn at the University of Texas at Austin, the researchers reported that they were “alarmed” at the lack of literature on effective research-based practices for reading instruction specifically for students with emotional/behavioral disorders (2000). Research tells us that many students with emotional and behavioral difficulties are significantly behind their peers in academic performance, including reading. However, the literature on students with emotional or behavioral disorders varies on specific findings such as whether students with LD have more severe reading problems than students with ED, and whether students with ED have more significant problems in reading or in math. From the research, two main ideas have come to the forefront: (1) students with ED have an established pattern of underachievement in reading and (2) reading difficulties have a strong link to conduct disorder and delinquent behavior in older students (Coleman & Vaughn, 2000). Additional studies have also found that students with ED combined with LD or attention deficit disorder, are particularly at risk for reading problems.

### Box 1

- For about 60% of the nation’s children, learning to read is a challenge, and for another 20% to 30%, reading is one of the most difficult tasks that they will have to master throughout their schooling.
- In 1994, in the state of California, 59% of fourth grade children had little or no mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary to perform reading activities at the fourth grade level.
- 49% of the fourth grade children in California who were reading below basic levels were from homes where the parents had graduated from college.
- The national average is 44% below basic reading levels.
- Reading failure cuts across all ethnic and socioeconomic variables: 71% of African-Americans, 81% of Hispanics, 44% of white students and 23% of Asians are reading below basic levels.
- Reading is a serious national problem that cannot simply be attributed to poverty, immigration, or the learning of English as a second language. The psychological, social and economic consequences of reading failure are extreme.

Lyon, R.G. (1998). *Overview of reading and literacy initiatives*. Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health



*Continued pg. 26*

Research findings on the process of learning to read in our nation's schools, by the Child Development and Behavior Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (Box 1), are quite astounding. Considering the role reading plays in American culture, if one does not learn how to read, they do not make it in America. Reading serves as the major foundational skill for all learning in school and the chances of academic failure are inevitable without it. "By the end of first grade, we begin to notice substantial decreases in the children's self-esteem, self-concept, and motivation to learn to read if they have not been able to master reading skills and keep up with their age-mates (Lyon, 1998)."

## Box 2

### Emotional Variability of Students

- When student's emotional states are stable, they tend to make more progress.

### Fear of Failure and Trust Issues

- Building trust between teacher and student can help the student overcome the fear failure that is ingrained in many ED students.

### Keeping Students Engaged

- Use games, high interest materials and reinforcement to motivate students.

### Instructional Practices

- Tutoring, especially cross-age tutoring, has been found to be highly motivating for students.

### Assessment and Monitoring

- Provide on-going checks, including self-monitoring to assess progress.

### Reading on a Daily Basis

- Students should be allowed to read something they enjoy on a daily basis.

Coleman, M. & Vaughn, S. (2000). Reading interventions for students with emotional/behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders*, 25(2), 93-104.

## What Teachers Can Do

In an attempt to supplement their limited findings from the review of the literature, Coleman and Vaughn interviewed practicing professionals who directly provide reading interventions to students classified ED. The findings from the teacher interviews (Box 2) produced several common variables that determine the effectiveness of interventions with ED students.

Two areas in which the literature on effective practices and Coleman's and Vaughn's teacher interviews yielded similar findings, includes cross-age tutoring and the use of a direct instruction approach. Cross-age tutoring can be an effective method for not only increasing motivation to read, but also in improving reading skills of both tutors and tutees. One the best researched approaches in peer tutoring, *Together We Can: Class-wide Peer Tutoring to Improve Basic Academic Skills*, has shown to produce dramatic academic differences for at-risk students. *Together We Can*, is available through Sopris West Publishing ([www.sopriswest.com](http://www.sopriswest.com)).

Another effective intervention for working on the reading skills of ED students is the use of a direct instruction approach. Direct instruction helps to maximize academic learning time and provide a structured learning environment where students with emotional and behavioral difficulties do not have the opportunity to disrupt and engage in other misbehaviors (Rhode, Jenson, & Reavis, 1992). A direct instruction approach uses group and face-to-face instruction from teachers or aides using carefully sequenced lessons. A list of recommended direct instruction programs appears in Box 3.

## Box 3

### Program

- Distar Language
- Read Well Program
- Reading for All Learners Program
- Reading Mastery
- REWARDS
- Corrective Reading Series

### Publisher

Science Research Assoc.  
Sopris West  
Utah State University  
Science Research Assoc.  
Sopris West  
Science Research Assoc.

## The Future

Extensive research has taught us a lot about effective reading practices. Although many of the existing programs can be generalized to specific populations, such as students with learning disabilities, there is a need for additional research concerning effective reading practices for students with emotional/behavioral classifications. The lack of data in this area significantly impairs teachers' ability to provide effective interventions to their students. Although there are still many questions that remain to be answered, it is the teachers who currently work with ED students that serve as an important resource to help find the answers. ■

# Learning About Inclusion.....

## Through Children's Literature

Ever wondered how you could teach students (and adults) about inclusion and diversity without giving a lecture? One of our project's favorite techniques is to teach these concepts using children's literature. We have found that students of all ages enjoy a well written and illustrated children's story and that literature can be an effective teaching tool for creating more inclusive attitudes and environments.

In this article I'll share three of our favorite books along with an activity we've used to help teach these concepts.

### 1. *Different, Just Like Me* by Lori Mitchell

(ISBN 0-88106-975-2) .....

This delightful book follows a young girl on an ordinary journey through one day in her life. As she goes about her day she encounters a variety of different people whom she then compares to herself. She discovers ways that they are "different" and ways that they are similar, "Just like me."

**Activity:** Bind-a-Book

**Materials:** At least one piece of paper for each student and something to write/draw with.

#### Teacher Instructions:

After reading/sharing this book with your students, each student can write and illustrate his/her own parallel book comparing differences and similarities between themselves and others (classmates, peers, community members, etc.). These personalized books can then be shared with the class. (If you want a quick and easy way for everyone in the class to create and bind an 8 page book using only a single sheet of paper, send me an email request to [loydeneb@provo.k12.ut.us](mailto:loydeneb@provo.k12.ut.us) and we'll send you the instructions.)

### 2. *Who Is the Beast* by Keith Baker

(ISBN 0-15-296057-0) .....

This beautifully illustrated book slowly uncovers the characteristics of an initially unknown and frightening beast as it moves past other animals in the jungle. Once the true beast is discovered, tracks are retraced and similarities are drawn between each of the animals.

**Activity:** Stop-N-Draw

**Materials:** One sheet of drawing paper for each student and a variety of colored markers, pens, pencils or paints.

#### Teacher Instructions:

Organize the students into small groups (about 4-6) and hand out the materials. Instruct the students to listen carefully and then use their "minds eye" or "imagination" to help them visualize what you read to them. Start reading the book aloud without showing

the students the book or the illustrations. Stop after the first 2 pages and ask the students to draw what they visualized. After the drawings are complete (you may want to establish a time limit), have the students pass their paper to the person on their left or right, (you choose how you want them to rotate papers). As papers are rotated each student should give an "appreciation" to the student whose drawing they just received. (Note: We are assuming the skill of giving "appreciation statements" has already been taught to the students. If not, we highly suggest this skill be taught. If you need ideas for resources for teaching such skills please contact us at Utah's Project for Inclusion.) Once appreciations have all been given, go on to read the next 2 pages and continue the process steps 4-6 (reading, stopping, drawing, rotating papers, & giving appreciation statements) until you get to the part in the book where the beast is discovered. (Note: The overall effect here is that after drawing, students will be rotating papers- the students will then add their next drawing to a new paper. The cumulative effect will be that each drawing will be a unique composition contributed to by all the members of their group.) Finish reading the last half of the book to the students sharing the illustrations. Take some time to share the drawings and discuss what was learned from the book, as well as the activity itself.

### 3. *The Salamander Room* by Anne Mazer

(ISBN 0-15-296057-0) .....

This is another beautifully illustrated book that tells the story of how a young boy recreates his bedroom into the perfect living environment for his pet salamander.

**Activity:** Chant (or sing) Your Choice

**Materials:** None

#### Teacher Instructions:

After reading the book aloud to the students, have each student individually think of the things they need in the classroom (or school) to make it a perfect environment for themselves. (If the students are able to write, they can write this list down.) Have the students identify their most important idea (they can put a star on a written list). Arrange students into small groups and have each group come up with a chant or a song that expresses the most important idea from each member of their group. (If students have difficulty coming up with something you may suggest a well-known nursery rhyme or song tune they can use, where they can just change the words.) Have each group perform their chant or song for the class. (Note: This is a great learning activity for teachers too because you'll hear students' ideas for creating a better classroom!) ■

For additional literature ideas check out our compiled book list & review in the library section of our web site at: [www.usoe.k12.ut.us/sars/inclusion/index.htm](http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/sars/inclusion/index.htm)

Utah's Project for Inclusion

# PRESCHOOL LITERACY

Peggi Baker • S.I.P.C. Project



In reminiscing about the ongoing critique of America's schools, I recall a book addressing the topic with the title *Why Johnny Can't Read*. Now I have to admit that I never read the book but in speculating about today's children and their reading habits I would like to propose an alternate title; *Why Johnny Doesn't Want to Read*. My premise is that Johnny is not motivated to read. Perhaps

Johnny did not attend a developmentally appropriate preschool experience rich in language and literacy.

Formal instruction in academic skills has been the center of many preschool programs. This "push down" effect which is the result of social, political and economic forces bottoms out in the preschool classroom where teachers are trying to teach skills that were best learned in kindergarten and with kindergarten teachers trying to teach a curriculum which is developmentally appropriate for children in the first grade. This results in Johnny not being motivated to read and perhaps being required to perform skill and drill tasks above his developmental level. This "push down" effect, which needs to be "pushed out", is based on misconceptions of early learning (Elkind, 1986) and the lack of understanding of developmental needs of young children. Programs for preschool children should be tailored to meet the needs of the children rather than expecting children to adjust to demands that a program might require. In their guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practices, NAEYC states that "It is the responsibility of the educational system to adjust to the developmental needs and levels of the children it serves; children should not be expected to adapt to an inappropriate system." Too often we might find a book title describing this scenario: Is Johnny Ready for Kindergarten? instead of a more appropriate title: Is Kindergarten Ready for Johnny? In this story, we find a literacy-rich preschool environment in which Johnny learns to love reading and writing and he will be motivated to learn to read.

In his remarks for the Early Childhood Summit in June of 2000, former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley stated that the collective motto (for literacy) should be "The stronger

the start, the better the finish." He also stated that we could revolutionize American education if we can "get parents and teachers to read to a child 30 minutes a day during the early childhood years." The key to this strong start is creating a love affair with books.

In their book, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson assert that "reading aloud to children is the single most important activity for creating the motivation and background knowledge essential for success in reading."

The early childhood teacher has an awesome responsibility to create a literacy rich environment and to meet the challenge that he/she will set the attitudes (and motivation) that preschoolers will have towards reading and writing for their entire academic careers.

Literacy is a combination of reading and writing which develops from real life situations. In order for children to be motivated to learn to read and write, they need a reason to read and write (the function NEEDS to precede the form). Kids see adults doing it, they see that it is a way to get things done and it is meaningful. They implement the function into their play and learn reading and writing from the active engagement with books and literacy materials in their play.

Children need years of play with real objects and events before they can make the connection and derive meaning from symbols of letters and numbers. Skills and drills at this age are a surefire way to extinguish the motivational flame for reading and writing.

Reading aloud to children creates the foundation for later skill development that proceeds formal reading instruction. Reading aloud to children helps them associate reading with pleasure and motivates them to find opportunities to "read" and enjoy books on their own. Hopefully you can recall a favorite memory of being read to by someone who was significant in your early reading instruction.

Research has shown that parents who demonstrate that reading is a source of pleasure have children who have a positive view about reading. They found that these children are

more motivated to persist in learning to read despite difficulties that they may encounter in their early years.

In implementing a literacy rich classroom teachers should consider the following:

- Is there sufficient time in the day's schedule for literate behavior? The schedule should allow for children to have some uninterrupted time to integrate literacy into their play themes, without too much teacher's choice and teacher's voice.
- Is there enough space for literate play to take place? Work tables and play areas need sufficient space to accommodate communication and the sharing of materials.
- Are there sufficient materials for literacy play: including all kinds of writing materials, books, tablets, clipboards, post it notes, not only in the writing center but in the dress up area, the block area, outside?
- Does the teacher know how to join in but not take over the children's play with prompts to elaborate the play through language, suggesting that they look at the menu in a pretend restaurant or write checks in the pretend store? Once children have a reason to use print, they become motivated to learn its features.

The following skills will nurture early literacy in the preschool classroom:

1. Oral language - Use rich language in the classroom and encourage the children to speak with complex sentences. Give the children opportunities to be listened to. Read aloud daily and give children the opportunity to retell and act out the stories.
2. General knowledge - Share fiction as well as non-fiction books. Encourage children's questions. Provide new and varied experiences. Help children to become curious about their environment. Provide outdoor experiences and field-trips. Teach thematic units based on the CHILD'S interests. Vary your centers on a weekly basis.
3. Print awareness - Provide books, big books, magazines, newspapers, menus, cookbooks. Call attention as you read to the beginning, middle and end of the book. Share the name of the author and illustrator. Label objects around the classroom. Sometimes point to the words as you read.
4. Phonemic awareness - Read books that play with words (like Dr. Seuss). Sing nursery rhymes and rhyming songs. Play listening games. Use puppets and fingerplays to motivate and encourage word play.
5. Alphabet knowledge - Provide alphabet puzzles, magnetic letters, share alphabet books, use alphabet cookie cutters in the play dough.
6. Prewriting - Encourage pretend writing by having the children write grocery lists or menu selections or a car repair order in the automotive shop. Allow children to dictate sentences or stories for their drawings.

Reading aloud to children also creates a sense of community. A sense of belonging and validation can be established while building a sense of inclusion and acceptance. Books with predictable patterns where the children "read" the pattern are a great tool for instilling a sense of confidence as the child "reads" along.

Preschool teachers can motivate children to love books by choosing appropriate books which are culturally sensitive and diverse, which also include stories about children with disabilities.

Books to be shared with preschoolers should:

- be no more than one to two lines of text per page and have no more than 6 words in a sentence
- have a consistent placement of the text
- have strong oral language patterns
- include repetition of a sentence or a phrase
- have writing in the present tense
- have stories that are captivating (How did we ever learn to read with *Dick and Jane*?)
- have rhyme, rhythm and repetition
- have illustrations that match the text
- have illustrations that provide high support and are not too busy for the page



When you purposefully include children in daily literacy events, provide print filled opportunities for play and share a variety of literature you help to build a strong foundation for literacy. Effective teaching is based on what we want kids to be doing tomorrow. I would like my preschool students to title the book they write: *Everything I Needed to Love Reading I Learned in Preschool!* ■

# Learning To Read: Not As Mysterious As We Think

**Gordon Gibb • President, Utah CEC  
Sub-division of Learning Disabilities**



**Learning to read.** This may be the most consistently discussed subject in the long history of education. Few people would debate the importance of reading, but many disagree about solving the mysteries of helping children learn this essential skill. A brief overview of what is known about language, reading, and effective teaching may help teachers with the detective work needed to meet the needs of students with reading difficulties. To this end, this article asks and answers four questions about language, reading, and how teaching can bring good things to pass.

## **Question 1: What are some basic things we know about language?**

The answer to this question can be summarized by three bullet points:

- Spoken language is made up of sounds.
- Written language is made up of symbols.
- Symbols can be used to represent sounds.

To read well, children must hear and recognize letter sounds and they must see and recognize letter names. They must also master the correlation between letter names and sounds. This knowledge can be assessed for individual students, and it can also be taught. Keeping this in mind, let's look at the next question.

## **Question 2: What are some basic things we know about reading?**

Five bullet points give us the answer to this question:

- Sounds are blended into words.
- Words make up sentences and paragraphs.
- Words, sentences, and paragraphs convey meaning.
- Meaning informs or entertains us.
- Information helps us think, write, and speak meaningfully.

We know that when the mechanics of reading are learned and used fluently, then meaning can be grasped and information can be obtained.

We also know that information does not stand alone. Children must use the knowledge gained through reading to reason and to express themselves if language is to have meaning in their lives.

If we summarize the answers to our first two questions, we can say that all good readers must:

- Hear and recognize letter sounds.
- See and recognize letter names.
- Blend sounds into words.
- Read words in sentences with fluency.
- Comprehend on several levels, including literally, inferentially, critically, and creatively.

### Question 3: What should we teach?

Helping children learn to read well requires that we teach them:

- To know letter names and sounds.
- How to decode and remember new vocabulary.
- How to read fluently.
- How to comprehend what they read.
- How to use their knowledge to think and to express themselves.

Now all that is required is for teachers to learn and use effective methods for bringing these things to pass. The last question addresses this important task.

### Question 4: How should we teach reading?

The information we've reviewed so far is not new or particularly controversial for those who study the process of reading. The real discussion and dissension in the field centers on methodology. It seems as though many scholars and practitioners are committed to continuing the search for some elusive grand key to reading instruction. Unfortunately, we have often abandoned effective practice in the effort to refine and improve what already works. In a presentation at the 2000 Council for Exceptional Children Convention in Vancouver, BC, Dr. Ed Kame'enui of the University of Oregon stated, "We have to stop this argument. We know what is required to learn to read, and we know how to teach it. We must not waste more time on this discussion. Instead, we must prepare teachers to teach what we already know, and teach it well."

What is it that we already know and can apply to the essential elements of reading mentioned above? Let's look at three principles of learning. First, we know that most children benefit from multimodality learning. Effective reading instruction must include opportunities for students to see, hear, say, spell, read, and write at each stage of instruction.

Second, we know that one of the highest correlates to new learning is the number of opportunities to respond. The best way to dramatically increase opportunities to respond is to have students respond together. This choral responding is safe for individual students, builds confidence through high rates of success, and provides immediate feedback to students who respond incorrectly. Choral responding, coupled with high rates of praise and reteaching as needed, is effective for learning and practicing new skills.

Third, we know that new learning must be applied and practiced. Sounds and words by themselves will not improve reading, but application to reading lots and lots of stories and books will. Numerous opportunities for students to read both silently and orally are essential to reading instruction.

In addition to the essentials mentioned above, a good reading program will immediately involve students in the output process. Any symbol learned should also be spoken and written; any word learned should be instantly spoken, spelled aloud, read, and written correctly. Any comprehension skill mastered should also be used in the authoring mode and practiced in the writing process.

Understanding the connections between language and reading, and the requirements of each, is essential for planning and implementing effective reading instruction. When linked with effective teaching practices, this understanding provides keys to the mysteries of reading for both students and teachers. ■



## The Utah Federation Council for Exceptional Children

Invites you to join Special Education's  
premiere professional organization.

For more information contact:

**LuAnn Hill**

**Utah Federation Membership Chairperson**  
**801-572-7010 • roberth@trisys.com**

# Reading Adds Life To Life

## Utah Parent Center



It is a certainty that a person with limited or no reading skills misses much that is to be enjoyed in life experiences. If he doesn't learn to read well enough to comprehend what he is reading or if he doesn't learn to read effortlessly enough to render reading pleasurable, his chance for a fulfilling life is greatly impacted. Academic success, financial success, the ability to find interesting work, personal autonomy, and self-esteem are compromised.

Students with reading disabilities need every opportunity to increase reading skills to be able to participate more fully in life experiences. Nineteen year old Brett picks up a magazine of his choice and reads articles of interest and reads the Sunday funnies after years of reading instruction and exposure provided by his school teachers and family. He can browse and read from his collection of books on history. This participation in everyday reading

came slowly. The change from picture browsing to skimming and reading came in his high school years.

Brett was reading three letter words at the age of three, but because of focus and learning struggles he needed time to increase his reading abilities. Health issues with metabolism prevented the use of focus medications. Maturity was needed to aid focus. Repetition and continued varied exposure were needed to provide a long term memory base instead of the use of short term memory to read. Even though Brett has a lot of room for growth in reading, he can use the reading skills he has for survival, employment, and pleasure. Reading has become a self-chosen activity for him.

A blend of whole language and phonics provides reading skills accessibility for students like Brett. Years of decoding activities are needed. A reasonable amount

**Wilma Talbot • S.S.W. Parent Consultant/Trainer • Utah Parent Center**



of well-designed practice brings positive outcomes. It has been found that practice is avoided or merely tolerated without real cognitive involvement.

In a document developed by The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators (part of cooperative agreement #H180MI0006 from the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs), it states, "A teacher must be ready and able to switch strategies easily. A teacher must be equipped to jump in wherever required and provide appropriate feedback on the spot, whether it be with phonics information, an analogy, or a pointed question. (Of course, he or she must also know when not to jump in but rather let the child find his own way.) Teachers need good training to operate flexibly with multiple strategies and activities."

The above document further states that, "Research makes clear that children do not learn to read the way they learn to talk. Speech is a natural human capacity, and learning to talk requires little more than exposure and opportunity. In contrast, written language is an artifact, a human invention, and reading is not a skill that can be acquired through immersion alone. Beginning readers benefit from instruction that helps them understand that the words they speak and hear can be represented by written symbols – and that letters and the sounds associated with them, when combined and recombined, form words – just as they benefit from experiences that make reading fun." Success in reading is supported by a more balanced reading approach that includes building phonological awareness along with the reading of meaningful and engaging texts.

Parents of students with reading disabilities appreciate the hours and years teachers dedicate to group reading instruction, exploration of word composition and meanings, stories and books read aloud, journal writing, and a variety of other activities showing how important reading is to daily life.

Parents should be encouraged to teach about reading and books at home. Lap time or close time of parents and child reading together motivates the development, enjoyment, and fluency of reading. Parents can read aloud with their child labels on packages, instructions to board games, traffic signs, billboards and maps. "If it has words, read

it..." is found on a bookmark from the U.S. Department Of Education. Parents and child can watch *Sesame Street* and together engage in the fun. They can take turns reading the closed captions to a favorite TV show. Parents are key to reading skill development and exposure.

Judith A. Winn and Amy Otis-Wilborn have an excellent article in *Teaching Exceptional Children* SEPT/OCT 1999 entitled "Monitoring Literacy Learning." The article addresses monitoring and collecting data in the literacy areas targeted in each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The authors state "With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), special education teachers are becoming increasingly accountable for students' progress, especially in relation to the general education curriculum." They give examples of monitoring and data collection needed to successfully continue and adjust instruction for individual students. The data can be used in reporting the student's progress toward the annual goals to parents, and reporting if the progress is sufficient to meet the goals. This reporting to parents will meet the quarterly or trimester reporting that is now required by the reauthorization of IDEA.

"If the reader finishes one book and asks for another, you know you are succeeding!" declares the workbook *Read Write Now* from the U. S. Department of Education. Students with disabilities are dependent on the school-parent team to teach reading to enhance enjoyment in life experiences. This process may require several years of dedication to the art of reading. Reading does add life to one's life. ■



# SEASONS OF CHANGE

*We've all heard the phrase, "there is nothing as constant as change." Life experience attests to the truth of that statement and the impact that change, whatever it may look like, has on us personally and professionally. The following article addresses the "Seasons of Change" that we experience. You are probably familiar with the authors, Anita DeBoer and Susan Fister. They have contributed greatly to the Mentor Academy and most recently presented on "Working Together Through the Seasons of Change" at the Mentor Conference in January.*

## Anita DeBoer & Susan Fister, Consultants



**T**o be or not to be; to change or not to change. That is the struggle we all face today. Do we try to hang on to what we have, or do we risk and do something different? Which is nobler of mind? Unlike Hamlet's query, change for us as educators is not a choice. It is inevitable. The world is rapidly changing and so must we. That puts us squarely on the horns of a dilemma. We can either view change as "a way of life" and learn to thrive on it, or we can view it as "a constant aggravation" and, as a result, live with perpetual stress. The decision is ours as we move into the next millennium.

The good news is that change can be an exciting, challenging, and exhilarating experience. Change is learning filled with intrigue. Change and learning are reciprocally related: when we learn, we change; when we change, we learn. It is human nature to want to discover new ideas.

Change has the potential to wake up our thinking forcing us to create more effective and efficient ways of doing things. It allows us to reflect on our old habits and beliefs and determine which ones are serving us well and which ones need to be revised or possibly discarded.

Change can also be difficult, even when it is our choice to change. Typically, there is pain. It is not for the faint of heart. When we ask ourselves and others to change, we are asking that we change our feelings, our beliefs, our values, and our behaviors, in summary, our attitudes. No small or easy task!

Change today is persistent, pervasive, and chaotic. It is not a single thing, like a program, a strategy, or an innovation. It's a bunch of things glued together – like a collage. One change overlaps another, and they are interconnected in complex ways. We don't have the luxury of completing one change before another one is on top of us.

Change can be a risky business. There are no guarantees. We often have the sense that we are in uncharted waters in a leaky boat. As a result, every member of the





the change process itself, the more skilled we are at creating and supporting it in others and ourselves.

The process of change is like the four seasons of the year. It is a never-ending cycle. Each season has unique features and challenges. Transitions from one season to the next can be very stressful if we do not have a picture of how we are likely to feel and behave during the struggles and challenges in the seasons ahead. *Working Together Through the Seasons of Change* (DeBoer & Fister 2000) will help you understand how, after the contentment of summer, you can once again return to the pleasures of spring without being devastated by the frustrating and challenging days of fall and winter. For more information on obtaining *Working Together Through the Seasons of Change* and/or training, contact Susan Fister at 801/582-4070 or email [Sfister558@aol.com](mailto:Sfister558@aol.com) ■

crew must be skilled if we are to survive and discover more fruitful lands.

It takes courage to change our old habits and routines. Behaving courageously means that we must seize every opportunity to experiment and redesign more effective strategies for the future. Courageous people do not fear failure, they simply reframe it as another learning opportunity. Failure to them is not being knocked down, but as not having the will to get back up.

Initially most of us resist change, even when we know it is in our best interests to go forward with it. We resist for different reasons: (1) We are unaware of the need for change; (2) We don't believe the change is necessary or good; (3) We are unwilling to push through the pain to a different way; and (4) We fail to see problems as opportunities for learning, changing, and progressing.

One could argue that people don't resist change, per se, they resist being changed. Our openness to making a change in how we do things depends, to a large extent, on whose idea it is. We all love our own ideas and are skeptical of others. To complicate the process, we label people. For example, if a change is my idea and you resist me, I am likely to label you a Resistor or a Blocker. If a change is your idea and I am skeptical or unwilling to consider it, I am likely to label you a Zealot or a Crusader. The problem with labeling is that it allows us to dismiss people as not worthy of our time and energy. Unfortunately, in the end, we both lose.

If we make the choice to thrive on change, rather than be its victim, we will need a wide range of skills and knowledge. In fact, the more information we have about

### ***UMTA Mentors:***

*Serve as change agents/coaches/mentors across grade levels and curriculum.*

*Provide personnel development training to other educators which support validated educational practices.*

*Network with other UMTA members throughout the state to maintain friendships and collegial contacts for continued professional development.*

*Promote student success for students with disabilities.*

*Focus on educational models that reflect teacher and student accountability.*

*Maintain a knowledge base of information on current educational research that can be applied to the mentor's setting.*

*Share knowledge with others to achieve the goal of success for all.*

# Art Access/Vsa Arts Of Utah

## To Reward Special Education Students



Art Access/VSA arts of Utah, with support from the State Office of Education-Special Education Services Unit, is pleased to announce the availability of five Educator Incentive Awards, each in the amount of \$400. These awards are intended to reward educators who develop innovative ways to implement and adapt the State Office of Education Art Core Curriculum in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

We recognize that many educators traditionally use the summer months to develop new lessons for their students. We hope that teachers who work with students with disabilities will take advantage of the availability of these Incentive Awards to encourage them in their efforts to develop exciting new adaptive art lesson plans, curriculum, or projects to meet the needs of their students.

To apply for an Educator Incentive Award, teachers submit a one-page application form with a short written proposal. Teachers receiving an award will be required to document their work and provide evidence of how they shared their newly developed art lesson plans, curriculum, or project with other educators. One copy of the adapted art lessons, such as lesson plans, curriculum, or details of the art project developed, will be given to Art Access/VSA arts of Utah to place in the Teacher Resource Library at Art Access. These lesson plans are available to other special educators and artists.

To help get you thinking of what you may want to propose to work on for an award, here are the 2000 Educator Incentive Award Recipients and a synopsis of their projects:

**MRS. ERIN LINTON** – Springville Elementary, Nebo School District. Food Sculpting Workshops using *Play With Your Food* by Joost Elffers as a guide. Students learned to see people, places, and things in a new way and made something extraordinary out of the ordinary.

**MS. CARRIE S. FOLLETT** – Lakeside Elementary, Davis School District. Adapted the following children's stories to puppet show format.

2nd Grade: *The Wolf's Chicken Stew* by Keiko Kasza

4th Grade: *Me First* by Lynn Munsinger

6th Grade: *Beautiful Buhla's Day at the Zoo* by Gary Hogg

**MS. VICKI HYLAND** – Timpanogos High School, Alpine School District. Biology lessons using *Biology, The Dynamics of Life* by Glencoe/McGraw Hill. Hyland evaluated knowledge acquisition by application using various modes of artistic expression.

**MR. DANIEL RUBIN** – Joel P. Jensen Middle School, Jordan School District. Involved students studying Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* using mask-making.

**MS. TERRESA SHREVE** – Jordan Valley School, Jordan School District. Will present a musical performance involving all students at Jordan Valley School in April 2001.

If you are interested in receiving an application for the 2001 Educator Incentive Awards, checking-out the above lesson plans, or receiving a copy of *The Sky Is Green: True Stories of Artists and Teachers of Children With Disabilities*, please contact Art Access/VSA Arts of Utah at (801)328-0703. Completed applications must be postmarked by **Friday, April 20, 2001.** ■

# AWARDS

**Julie Newland • Programming Coordinator VSA Arts of Utah (Art Access)**

# Service Directory.....

## Utah State Office of Education

### Special Education Services

- Mae Taylor • Director, At Risk and Special Education Services.....538-7711 • mtaylor@usoe.k12.ut.us
- Nan Gray • Coordinator of Special Education.....538-7757 • ngray@usoe.k12.ut.us
- Brenda Broadbent • Specialist, State and Federal Compliance.....538-7708 • bbroadbe@usoe.k12.ut.us
- Karen Kowalski • Specialist, Emotional Disturbances/Mental Health Issues..538-7568•kkowalski@usoe.k12.ut.us
- Susan Loving • Specialist, Transition.....538-7645 • sloving@usoe.k12.ut.us
- Cal Newbold • Specialist, Fiscal and Data Issues, Charter Schools.....538-7724 • cnewbold@usoe.K12.ut.us
- Valerie Scherbinske • Specialist, Preschool.....538-7846 • vscherbi@usoe.k12.ut.us
- Bruce Schroeder • Specialist, Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)  
.....538-7580 • bschroed@usoe.k12.ut.us
- Dale Sheld • Specialist, Learning Disabilities/Communication Disorders/Assistive Technology  
.....538-7707 • dsheld@usoe.K12.ut.us
- Deb Spark • Specialist, Assessment and Monitoring.....538-7576 • dspark@usoe.K12.ut.us
- Jocelyn Taylor • Specialist, OHI, TBI, Autism .....538-7726 • jtaylor@usoe.K12.ut.us

### Supporting Inclusion for Preschool Children (SIPC)

- Peggi Baker • Project Specialist.....538-7907 • pbaker@usoe.k12.ut.us
- Angela Green • Project Specialist.....538-7641 • agreen@usoe.K12.ut.us

### Utah Learning Resource Center

- 2290 East 4500 South, #220, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117 • 272-3431
- Jerry Christensen, Team Leader.....jerryrc@ulrc.org
  - Jim Curtice.....jimc@ulrc.org
  - Michael Herbert.....michaelh@ulrc.org
  - Cheryl Hostetter.....cherylh@ulrc.org
  - Tracy Knickerbocker.....tracyk@ulrc.org
  - Davalee Miller.....davalees@ulrc.org

### Utah State Improvement Grant (SIG) & CSPD

- 2290 East 4500 South #265, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117 • 538-7580
- Bruce Schroeder, Project Director.....bschroed@sig.org
  - Monica Ferguson.....monicaf@sig.org
  - Dan Morgan.....danm@sig.org
  - Sharon Neyme.....sharonne@sig.org

### Utah's BEST and Inclusion Projects

- 2290 East 4500 South #170, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117 • 274-5825
- Natalie Allen • Project Specialist, BEST .....nataliea@provo.k12.ut.us
  - Mishele Carroll • Project Specialist, BEST.....mishelec@provo.K12.ut.us
  - Danelle Keith • Project Specialist, UPI.....danellek@provo.k12.ut.us
  - Loydene Hubbard-Berg • Project Specialist, UPI.....loydeneb@provo.k12.ut.us

### Utah Parent Center

- 2290 East 4500 South, #110, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117 • 272-1051
- Helen Post, Director.....upc@inconnect.com

### Back Cover Photos:

Pictures from the Education Expedition to Ouelessabougou, Mali, Africa. Ouelessabougou is the Sister City of Utah. Four teachers from Utah, Cathie Allen, Danelle Keith, Cheryl Hostetter and Marianne Jones, have participated with the OUA (Ouelessabougou Utah Alliance) in the cooperative learning of cultural and educational information.

# Utah Professional Development Calendar 2000-2001\*

## April 2001

- 17-22 CEC Annual Convention & Expo. Kansas City, MO.  
Contact CEC (888) 232-7733.
- 19-20 7th Annual Heritage Language Conference, San Juan High School,  
Blanding, UT. Contact San Juan School District 435-678-1210.
- 22-23 Inclusion Network Support Teams. Contact Danelle Keith (801) 274-5285.
- 27 Color Country Regional Transition Conference, College of Eastern Utah,  
Price, Utah. Contact Tony Done (435) 678-1222.

## May 2001

- 3 LEAD meeting. Jones Center, Salt Lake City.  
Contact Tom Walker (435) 586-2804.
- 4 Consortium, Salt Lake Airport Hilton.  
Contact Ted Kelly (801) 374-4934 or Jerry Christensen (801) 272-3431.
- 9-11 Troubled Youth Conference
- 17-18 Mentor Training, West Coast Hotel at Salt Lake.  
Contact ULRC (801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624.
- 17-18 BEST, Prospector Square, Park City. Contact Natalie Allen (801) 274-5285.

## 2001 - 2002 School Year

### October 2001

- 11-12 Brain Injury Conference. Provo Marriott Hotel, Provo, UT.  
Contact Jocelyn Taylor 801-538-7726.
- 19 Regional Inclusion Conference. Location to be announced.  
Contact Danelle Keith 801-274-5289.

### November 2001

- 2-3 LD Conference, Ogden Marriott, Ogden, UT.  
Contact Dale Sheld 801-538-7707.
- 9-10 7th Annual Utah Paraeducator Conference, Provo Marriott Hotel,  
Provo, UT. Contact Marilyn Likins 801-273-1843.

\*This information is provided as a service. We believe it to be accurate, but it is important to confirm with the contact listed. To obtain additional information and to supply important upcoming dates, please contact us at the number below. Current information is also available at the ULRC web site [www.ulrc.org](http://www.ulrc.org)

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### A National Tragedy

*In your December 2000 issue, Diane Dykman of the Utah Parent Center cites a study which found that the recidivism rate for special education students within the custody of the Utah Department of Corrections was 87 percent. As disturbing as this figure is, it is only 2 percent higher than the failure rate for the rest of the offender population. That is the real tragedy, and those figures are not unique to Utah. This is a national problem with no solution forthcoming, at least none to which Corrections would voluntarily submit. In a word, it is a matter of accountability.*

*A simple comparison will illustrate the point: Education is primarily a student-centered and outcome-based institution whose focus is on nurturing human development through achievement. Now suppose that 85 percent of the senior class at East High failed to graduate this year. What would happen? Aside from the scandalous media attention that the story would receive, teachers, counselors, administrators, and school board members would be lined up three abreast to greet the hooded executioner. Heads would roll. No one would dare argue that the affected students were solely to blame for their failure. Rather, the system would be assailed as unresponsive to the needs of those entrusted to its care. The public would demand drastic changes, and the educational community would be held hostage until corrective measures were taken.*

*Corrections can be found at the other end of the accountability spectrum: Year after year, the offender failure rate can exceed 85 percent and there is no media blitz, no public outcry, and no one's employment is jeopardized. Why? Because, sadly, there are few outcome demands placed on that system, and fewer still directed toward meeting the profound needs of offenders.*

*A state director of corrections was once asked what he would do if he were only paid based on the success rate of offenders. He confided that he would have to develop a much different way of doing business. Precisely!*

*Informed Citizen*

# Call For Articles

*The Utah Special Educator* publishes articles and announcements that are of interest to our readers by special education oriented organizations and educational institutions within the State of Utah. Announcements are limited to one half page in length. Articles and announcements must be received by the following dates for publication:

## Call the ULRC for September 2001 Submission Date & Topic

Contact Cheryl Hostetter, Editor, *The Utah Special Educator*, 2290 E. 4500 S., #220, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117  
(801) 272-3431 or (800) 662-6624 in Utah.

*The Utah Special Educator* is a symbol of the leadership of Dr. R. Elwood Pace  
Whose vision made the Consortium, the ULRC and this journal possible.

REGISTER EARLY – REGISTRESELO PRONTO POSIBLE!

## Family Links

A Conference for Families of Children and Adults with Disabilities  
Cadenas Familiares, Conferencia para Familias con Niños y  
Adultos con Incapacidades

**Friday, April 20, 2001**

Choice of Afternoon/Evening or Evening Only Session (See Times Below)



“Hints for Survival: Strategies to Assist Parents and Teachers in Teaching Children Management and Taking Ownership of Their Behavior—A Team Approach”

### Jo Mascorro

Consultant for Education—San Antonio, Texas  
**3:00-9:00 p.m. (Includes Dinner)**

Jo Mascorro is a high energy, entertaining speaker with expertise in behavior issues. She has been a favorite of Utah educators. **Parents and Educators** are encouraged to attend.

“Civil Rights, Self-Determination and Decision-Making vs. Guardianship: Alternatives to Guardianship”

### Dohn Hoyle

President/CEO, Association for Community Advocacy – Ann Arbor Michigan  
**6:30-9:00p.m.**

Dohn Hoyle is well-known nationally for his excellent presentation style and his expertise on these issues. \*This session may be registered for with or without dinner. See registration form.

## Saturday, April 21, 2001

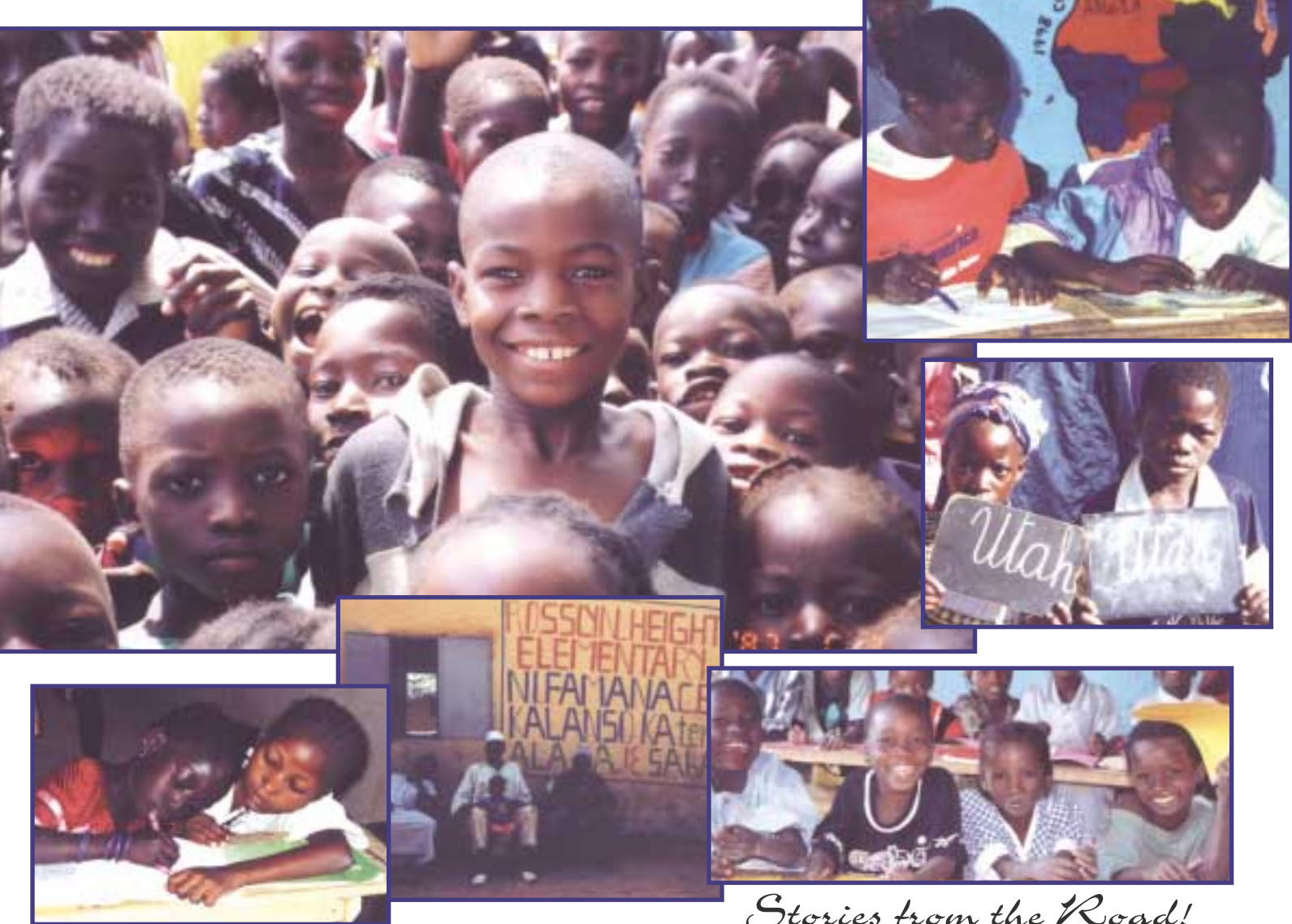
Over 60 Breakout Sessions to Choose From – 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

Continental Breakfast, Keynote Speaker, Bookstore, Workshops, Provider Exhibits.

Commercial Exhibits, Lunch, Regional and Topical Chat Rooms

**Location: Riverton High School, 12476 South, Riverton, Utah**

For a master copy of the registration packet that can be copied and distributed to families and professionals please contact Katie Post at the Utah Parent Center at 801-272-1051.



*Stories from the Road!*  
*See Pg.37*

**Utah Learning Resource Center  
2290 East 4500 South  
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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

