

# Direct Instruction

## ADDITION Effective School Practices

# NEWS

DON CRAWFORD and RANDI SAULTER, Editors

## *Paths to Effectiveness and Success in Education*

This edition of the *DI News* brings a lot of news about success that can be seen with Direct Instruction in a wide variety of places. We also bring you new ideas about increasing your own effectiveness and some perspectives on the educational enterprise as a whole.

Zig Engelmann has two pieces in this issue. One, entitled “Fixing Motivation Problems,” is destined to become a classic. Zig explains how the goal of teaching involves not just getting the right answers, but also motivating students. He offers some surprising insights into common DI practices that under certain circumstances may need to be changed to increase student motivation. Even if your classroom is already abuzz with high-octane motivation, you won’t want to miss this article!

A little known secret for fluency building is “duet reading.” Our first ever published research article on the practice suggests that duet reading works even when it is carried out somewhat differently than Zig suggests. Our other article on duet reading is Zig explaining, for the first time, his recommendations for how to do it, why he thinks it works, and who should be using it. These two articles are both very informative and provide a great springboard for future research on this promising practice.

Martin Kozloff writes a glowing review of an amazing book, *Amy’s Game: The Concealed Structure of Education* by Roger

F. Bass, Ph.D. This book tells the shocking truth about how the educational system fails so many children by ignoring what works in favor of the latest fads. Dr. Bass’ book answers the perennial question, “If DI works so well, why isn’t it in place everywhere?” This review will have you running to your computer and to Amazon.com. It will please you to know that Dr. Bass has arranged for all the proceeds from sales of the book to go to a fund for Amy.

Providing another perspective on the educational system, Bob Dixon’s “View from Askance” compares today’s “standards” to “those old time behavioral objectives.” After reading his article, see if you find yourself waxing 80% or more nostalgic for the old days.

Speaking of the old days, we have found what may be definitive photographic evidence of a long-lost, medieval-era patron saint of Direct Instruction ... or maybe not. You’ll have to view the photo and decide for yourself.

We have news from the principal of an elementary school in Butte, MT, where “Reading First [and the adoption of Reading Mastery] Changed Our World.” We hear from Gering, NE, where the adoption of DI closed the achievement gap (completely!) in three years. The news from a Native American tribal school in Puyallup, WA, is that the use of DI has completely changed the course of that school, not to mention the life prospects of the children within its

walls. East Side Charter School, serving a high proportion of children in poverty in Wilmington, DE, reports that after using DI for five years, each  
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## Direct Instruction News

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## Contribute to DI News:

*DI News* provides practitioners, ADI members, the DI community, and those new to DI with stories of successful implementations of DI, reports of ADI awards, tips regarding the effective delivery of DI, articles focused on particular types of instruction, reprints of articles on timely topics, and position papers that address current issues. *The News'* focus is to provide newsworthy events that help us reach the goals of teaching children more effectively and efficiently and communicating that a powerful technology for teaching exists but is not being utilized in most American schools. Readers are invited to contribute personal accounts of success as well as relevant topics deemed useful to the DI community. General areas of submission follow:

**From the field:** Submit letters describing your thrills and frustrations, problems and successes, and so on. A number of experts are available who may be able to offer helpful solutions and recommendations to persons seeking advice.

**News:** Report news of interest to ADI's members.

**Success stories:** Send your stories about successful instruction. These can be short, anecdotal pieces.

**Perspectives:** Submit critiques and perspective essays about a theme of current interest, such as: school restructuring, the ungraded classroom, cooperative learning, site-based management, learning styles, heterogeneous grouping, Regular Ed Initiative and the law, and so on.

**Book notes:** Review a book of interest to members.

**New products:** Descriptions of new products that are available are welcome. Send the description with a sample of the product or a research report validating its effectiveness. Space will be given only to products that have been field-tested and empirically validated.

**Tips for teachers:** Practical, short products that a teacher can copy and use immediately. This might be advice for solving a specific but pervasive problem, a data-keeping form, a single format that would successfully teach something meaningful and impress teachers with the effectiveness and cleverness of Direct Instruction.

**Submission Format:** Send an electronic copy with a hard copy of the manuscript. Indicate the name of the word-processing program you use. Save drawings and figures in separate files. Include an address and email address for each author.

**Illustrations and Figures:** Please send drawings or figures in a camera-ready form, even though you may also include them in electronic form.

Completed manuscripts should be sent to:

ADI Publications

P.O. Box 10252

Eugene, OR 97440

Acknowledgement of receipt of the manuscript will be sent by email. Articles are initially screened by the editors for placement in the correct ADI publication. If appropriate, the article will be sent out for review by peers in the field. These reviewers may recommend acceptance as is, revision without further review, revision with a subsequent review, or rejection. The author is usually notified about the status of the article within a 6- to 8-week period. If the article is published, the author will receive five complimentary copies of the issue in which his or her article appears.

*Paths...continued from page 1*

child in Grade 3 met or exceeded state reading standards, achieving the highest score in the state. Honey Creek Continuous Progress Elementary

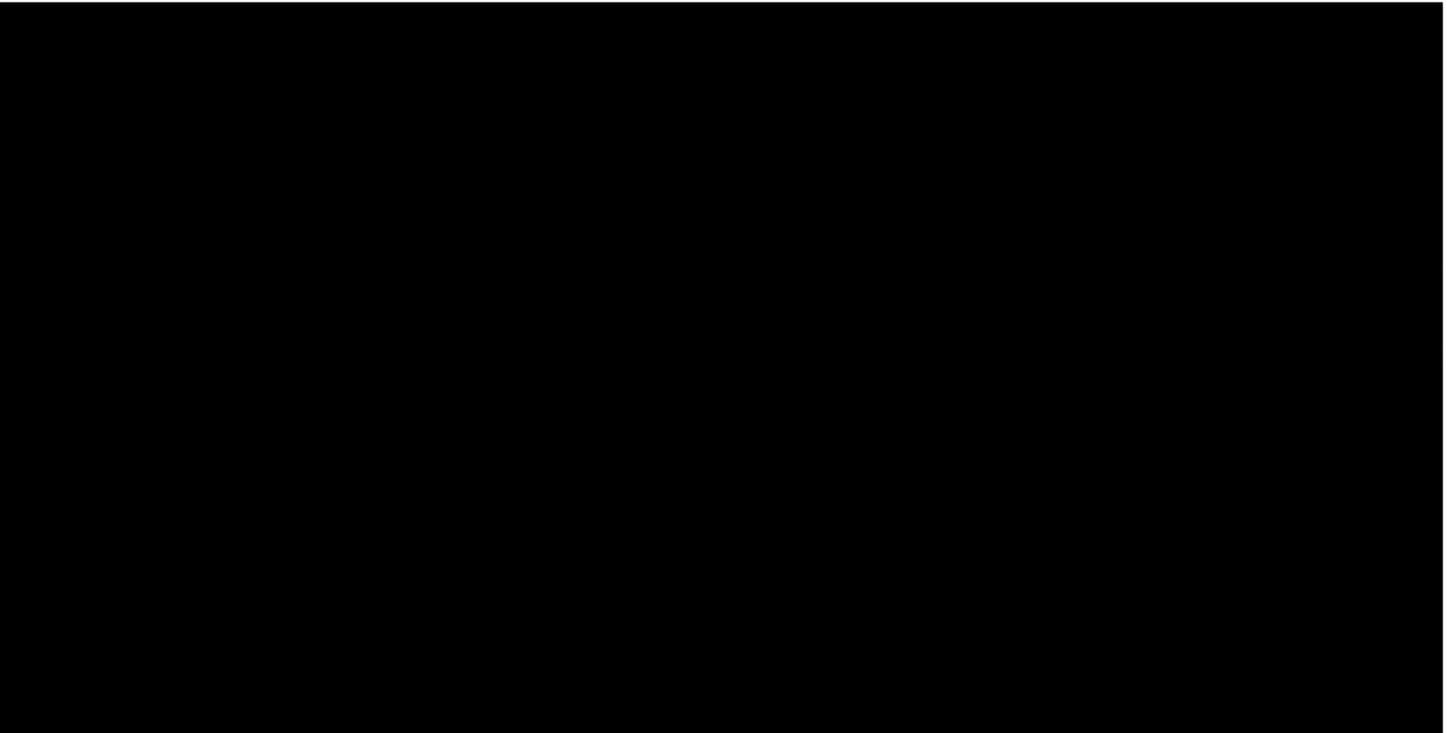
School in Milwaukee, WI, doubled the number of students proficient from 45% to 90%. And another school in the rural town of Milton-Freewater, OR, reports its great success using Direct

Instruction. We have the news, and wherever DI is being used well, the news is good. We hope you find this issue to be heartening or heart warming or both. *ADI*

BRYAN WICKMAN, Executive Director, Association for Direct Instruction



EMELINE COKELET, Association for Direct Instruction



BRYAN WICKMAN, Executive Director, Association for Direct Instruction

## *ADI News: New Research Consortium Created*

The DI community was stirred up quite a bit this summer when the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) released its findings on the research base for various beginning reading curricula, *Corrective Reading* among them. Surprisingly, *Corrective Reading* was listed as having only potentially positive effects in alphabets and fluency, and no discernable effects on comprehension! Putting it mildly, this is quite a shock and flies in the face of over 30 years of data.

And therein lies the problem. The WWC gets to make up its own rules on

what research qualifies for its review. Out of 26 studies submitted, only one met the WWC's evidence standards screen. A review of the list of screened research reads like a "who's who" of Direct Instruction.

For years DI has been able to make the claim that we not only get results, we have the research to prove it. Now that base has been entirely discounted. Programs such as *Reading Recovery*, *Stepping Stones to Literacy*, and *Earobics* have higher ratings than DI. This is not good news for proponents of DI.

To help remedy this situation, ADI is sponsoring the development of The Direct Instruction Research Consortium. The group is comprised of researchers, individual implementers, implementation companies, and SRA. The idea is for a forum for researchers to indicate what type of research they want to do and implementers to indicate what sites they are working in that might be suitable for conducting said research.

There will be a meeting held this fall bringing the group together for initial discussion of the problem and how to go about generating a new wave of research showing the effectiveness of DI. Look for more news of the consortium activities in the next *DI News*. [ADI](#)

EMELINE COKELET, Association for Direct Instruction

## *2007 ADI Excellence in Education Awards*

The Association for Direct Instruction in July recognized DI educators and schools for their commitment to and improvement in education. These awards, presented at the annual DI Conference in Eugene, OR, include the Wesley Becker Excellent School Award (includes \$1,000), the Wesley Becker Research Award (\$1,000 cash award for a research paper), the Susie Wayne Scholarship (\$500 for an essay by a graduate-level college student majoring in education), and new inductees into the Hall of Fame. Here are their stories.

### *Wesley Becker Excellent School Award*

#### **Hill City Elementary School, Jasper, Georgia**

“Our goal, since we opened in 2002, was to become one of the premier elementary schools in Georgia,” said Dr. Carlton Wilson, principal of Hill City. “Direct Instruction is playing a key role in our success.”

A K-5 public school in rural north Georgia with a current enrollment of

605 students, Hill City sees a continual rise in student achievement, has positive staff morale, and boasts parental involvement that far exceeds the norm, wrote nominator Paul McKinney of Educations Resources Inc., which has partnered with Hill City since 2002. For five years the school has successfully implemented Direct Instruction programs and seen results. Reading test scores have increased school-wide by 7%, with several grade levels increasing as much as 17% as measured by Georgia’s Criterion Reference Competence Test (CRCT).

Other subject test scores at various grade levels have shown significant gains as well, including: language arts,

*continued on page 5*

## *Everyone likes getting mail...*

ADI maintains a listserv discussion group called DI. This free service allows you to send a message out to all subscribers to the list just by sending one message. By subscribing to the DI list, you will be able to participate in discussions of topics of interest to DI users around the world. There are currently 500+ subscribers. You will automatically receive in your email box all messages that are sent to the list. This is a great place to ask for technical assistance, opinions on curricula, and hear about successes and pitfalls related to DI.

**To subscribe to the list, send the following message from your email account:**

To: majordomo@lists.uoregon.edu

In the message portion of the email simply type:

subscribe di

(Don't add *Please* or any other words to your message. It will only cause errors. majordomo is a computer, not a person. No one reads your subscription request.)

**You send your news and views out to the list subscribers, like this:**

To: di@lists.uoregon.edu

Subject: *Whatever describes your topic.*

Message: *Whatever you want to say.*

The list is retro-moderated, which means that some messages may not be posted if they are inappropriate. For the most part inappropriate messages are ones that contain offensive language or are off-topic solicitations.

The schools and organizations listed below are institutional members of the Association for Direct Instruction. We appreciate their continued support of quality education for students.

Aloha Huber Park  
*Beaverton, OR*

American Preparatory Academy  
*Draper, UT*

Baltimore City Public School System  
*Baltimore, MD*

Barren County Board of Education  
*Glasgow, KY*

Beacon Services  
*Milford, MA*

Berks County Intermediate Unit  
*Reading, PA*

Brighton Elementary  
*Seattle, WA*

Cache Valley Learning Center  
*Logan, UT*

City Springs School  
*Baltimore, MD*

Corona-Norco Unified School District  
*Norco, CA*

Criterion Child Enrichment  
*Milford, MA*

Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education  
*Elizabeth, NJ*

Educational Resources, Inc.  
*Missoula, MT*

Evergreen Center  
*Milford, MA*

Fairfield-Suisun USD  
*Fairfield, CA*

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy  
*Calgary, AB*

Frank Elementary School  
*Kenosha, WI*

Franklin Pierce Schools  
*Tacoma, WA*

Gering Public Schools  
*Gering, NE*

Granite School District  
*Salt Lake City, UT*

JP Associates  
*Valley Stream, NY*

Legacy Preparatory Academy  
*N. Salt Lake City, UT*

Livermore Joint Unified School District  
*Livermore, CA*

Morningside Academy  
*Seattle, WA*

Mountain View Academy  
*Greeley, CO*

Mt Pleasant Cottage School UFSD  
*Pleasantville, NY*

Navigator Pointe Academy  
*Draper, UT*

Norfolk Public Schools  
*Norfolk, NE*

OCISS-ISB-Languages Section  
*Honolulu, HI*

Oconomowoc Developmental Training Center  
*Oconomowoc, WI*

Park Elementary School USD 428  
*Great Bend, KS*

Santa Maria-Bonita School District  
*Santa Maria, CA*

School District of New Richmond  
*New Richmond, WI*

SRA McGraw Hill, Midwest Region  
*DeWitt, MI*

Sto-Rox School District  
*McKees Rocks, PA*

The Gregory School for Exceptional Learning  
*Ancaster, ON*

The Kendall School  
*Modesto, CA*

Tri City Elementary  
*Myrtle Creek, OR*

*Awards...continued from page 3*

16%; math, 20%, social studies, 16%, science, 13%, and writing at fifth grade, 20%.

In the fall of 2006, New York-based Standard and Poor's School Evaluation Services identified Hill City as significantly narrowing the achievement gap between socioeconomic disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students while raising achievement scores in math and reading for all students. The school has also achieved recognition for No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (four years), Georgia's Platinum Award (two years), Distinguished Title One School, and one of seven Georgia elementary schools to qualify for the U.S. Department of Education's National Blue Ribbon School.

"If we are receiving those kinds of awards," Wilson said, "we know that our students are prepared to go to the next level. And that is our goal, and that's what we strive for."

### **The Gregory School for Exceptional Learning, Ancaster, Ontario**

The Gregory School opened in 2002 expressly to provide Direct Instruction to students struggling due to learning disabilities, communication disorders, or attention difficulties. Growing from its first class of six students, the school now has 18 students, about a third of them with autism, and uses DI in a small, staff-intensive setting.

Principal Angeline Sarabura, who has a son with mild intellectual disability, started The Gregory School when she realized he wouldn't be able to learn in public school. "In Canada, there is no DI in the public system," she said. "And that's why I opened my school."

The school is helping students who were struggling in other learning environments find success with both their academics and self-worth. "The Direct Instruction teaching method has

allowed our daughter to experience academic success for the first time, which has increased her confidence and attitude towards school as well as her self-esteem," said Kathy Gilbert, a parent at the school.

Every year the school has offered scholarships to students in the care of the Catholic Children's Aid who were struggling in the public education system. Nominator Michelle Ritter, a speech-language pathologist, saw two such students who were not succeeding in their regular school settings

*"If we are receiving those kinds of awards, we know that our students are prepared to go to the next level. And that is our goal, and that's what we strive for."—Dr. Carlton Wilson, Hill City Elementary School*

learn to read and be successful in math at The Gregory School. "Moreover, as a result of their success, they experienced increased self-esteem," she said.

"As the school has grown," said Catherine McConnell, a behavior consultant, "the staff has exerted tireless effort in developing their skills, seeking out additional training to better meet the needs of each student. They have succeeded in developing a community where all individuals continually progress toward their potential, successfully meeting the education and social needs of a diverse student population."

### **Wesley Becker Research Award**

#### **Lisa L. Williksen**

This award honors Wesley Becker, one of the "pioneers" of Direct Instruc-

tion, whose skill as a researcher helped establish DI as a credible approach to teaching children.

Williksen, who is currently pursuing her Ph.D. at Eastern Washington University, won the award for her paper titled "A 1-Semester Within-Program Assessment Evaluation of *Mastering Math Facts* and *Word Problems Made Easy* in a Middle School Resource Room." Her paper will be published in the upcoming 2008 edition of the Journal of Direct Instruction.

### **Susie Wayne Scholarship**

#### **Lisa Piper**

This scholarship was established in honor of Susie Wayne, an outstanding researcher, supervisor, and teacher in the greater Seattle area who died in 1996. In memory of her dedication to effective instruction for all students, a cash award is given to a graduate-level college student majoring in education.

Piper, a student at Eastern Washington University, wrote the winning essay, about her dream of becoming a teacher and her struggles with her own classroom before she learned about Direct Instruction. She implemented DI in her seventh-grade class and saw a positive change in her students. After 10 years of teaching, Piper returned to school for a master's degree program in explicit instruction strategies, academically at-risk students, and mathematics, to achieve excellence in teaching so she can help her students achieve excellence.

### **Hall of Fame**

#### **Bonnie Grossen**

Calling Grossen a "dispassionate researcher" is probably the understatement of the year, said Zig Engelmann. "If you looked up 'full-immersion person' in the dictionary, it would be Bonnie."

Grossen, a DI researcher, educator, and author, began her career in the 1960s

when she worked at the Goethe Institute in Germany, then returned to the U.S. to teach German and literature in Texas. In the 1970s, she and a friend moved to Idaho to teach on the Coeur D'Alene Indian reservation and realized they needed to expand their methods to help the students learn to read. In 1975, Grossen traveled to a DI conference, then returned to Idaho to implement what she had learned. By the end of the following school year, every student in the school was a reader, she said.

Grossen earned a master's degree and worked in Junction City, OR, for six years, then returned to school again for

her Ph.D, winning two national awards for her dissertation. In the '90s she went to South Africa with an eye to changing the educational system, the teachers college, and making countless other reforms in her typical fashion, Engelmann joked. When the country became politically unstable and no longer safe, Grossen returned to the U.S. to continue her work here.

She has been involved in the AFT, started the nonprofit organization Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE), worked in California with the Goethe Model, and expanded that model into the REACH System, now published by SRA.

"She's amazing in terms of things she gets done," Engelmann said.

### **Kip Orloff and Judi Carlson**

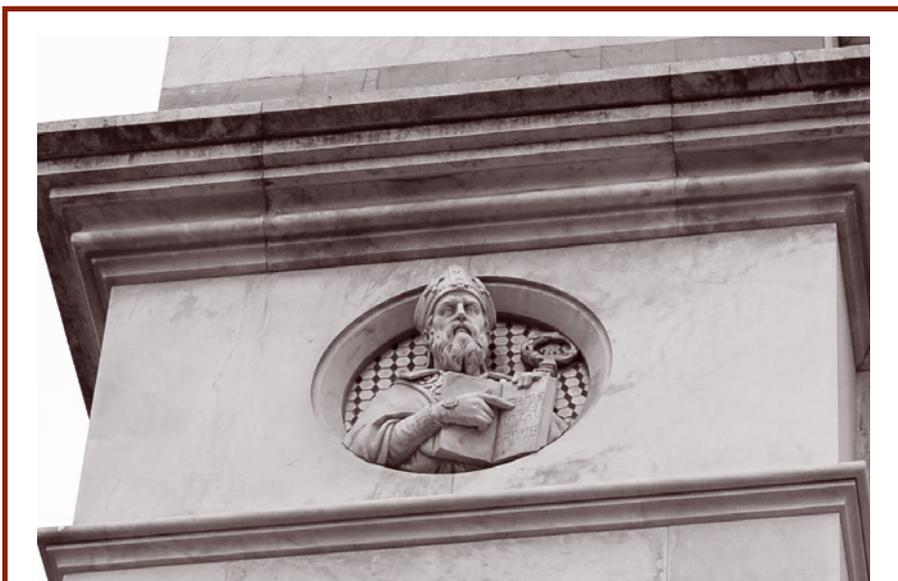
Longtime DI consultants Orloff and Carlson are effective leaders who have helped numerous educators and children during their careers. With 76 years of experience between the two of them, both women can "get it done," with tenacity and a purpose, said Carolyn Schneider.

Orloff started in 1969 teaching DISTAR, cramming eight back-to-back Reading 1 lessons into a morning's worth of teaching. Carlson started as a classroom teacher in Omaha, NE. The two later learned to coach together. Orloff, of Westlake Village, CA, worked in Chicago, Atlanta, the Southeast, and on the West Coast. Carlson, of Omaha, coached and trained in 42 states, worked with the Follow Through model at the University of Oregon, and now works for NIFDI and independently in Wisconsin and Nebraska.

Both consultants have worked in many difficult situations and raised test scores, while also teaching other educators how to be good and effective leaders, Schneider said. "I learned early on, not only did these two care and believe every child could learn," she said, "but early on from these two I learned they believe every child has a right to learn, and that no one is going to be left behind when the opportunity is there to get Direct Instruction."

### *A Tribute to Linda McGlocklin*

Molly Blakely presented a moving tribute to Linda McGlocklin, a DI educator and first-grade teacher at Evergreen Elementary in Spokane, WA, who died last spring of throat cancer. Linda was "a gift to the world of Direct Instruction, and a gift to every student who was in her class," Blakely said.



## *Patron Saint of DI?*

Dear readers,

Longtime ADI member and friend Maria Vanoni sent us this amazing photograph from her recent travels in Florence, Italy. It appeared to us as if she had discovered evidence of a medieval-era patron saint of Direct Instruction. She wrote to tell us, "The relief is from the west facade of the gothic Basilica di Santa Croce in Florence. While normal tourists were inside checking out tombs of celebrated Italians like Michelangelo and Galileo, I was outside trying to capture 'Santo Siegfried di (DI?) Firenze' with my zoom lens." We understand totally, and would have done the same had we been there in person with a good zoom lens. And we thought you all would enjoy seeing it as much as we did.

Yours truly, Randi and Don

McGlocklin taught first grade for more than 20 years and single-handedly fought to put DI in her school, and won, Blakely said. A DI trainer and coach, McGlocklin was awarded the DI Teacher of the Year award in 1998.

Even while battling cancer, McGlocklin continued her commitment to DI.

“Until the very end of her life, Linda was going to school each morning and teaching her first-grade classroom Direct Instruction reading groups,” Blakely said.

Her approach clearly inspired the people she taught. At her funeral in April filled with students, parents,

and colleagues, one woman introduced herself as a student from McGlocklin’s very first first-grade class, and now a first-grade teacher herself, Blakely said.

“Linda McGlocklin,” she continued, “is no doubt in the special wing in heaven set aside for our DI friends.” *ADI*



## Success Stories

# Oregon Reading First Project Uses Reading Mastery Plus As Core Reading Program

When educators in Milton-Freewater Unified School District 7 in Milton-Freewater, OR, were granted Reading First funds for a five-year project in Grades K-3, they chose SRA/McGraw-Hill's *Reading Mastery Plus* as their core reading program. The project began at the start of the 2003-04 school year, and while success is apparent with all students, it is particularly obvious with Hispanic students, the majority of whom are classified as English-Language Learners (ELL).

By 2006 (three years into the project), the gap between all students and Hispanic students had closed. In addition, the percentage of both student groups who met or exceeded state reading standards dramatically increased.

The two reading coaches involved with the project said success starts in kindergarten.

"The majority of ELL students graduating kindergarten are no longer classi-

fied as non-English speakers," explained Judy Chesnut, retired district elementary principal and part-time reading coach. "Not one of the ELL students going into Grade 3 who has been in our program for three years is classified as non-English speaking."

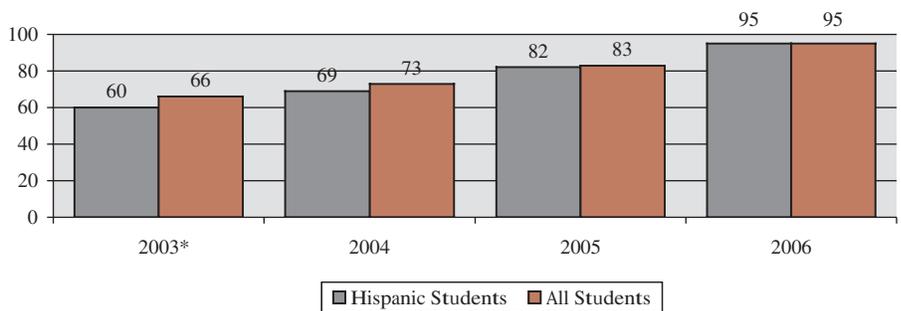
Tricia Perez is the other reading coach involved with the Reading First project. She said before *Reading Mastery Plus* instruction began in the early grades, approximately 15% of Grade 3 students started the year reading at Level 1.

"Now the majority of our Grade 3 students start the year reading at Level 3 or above," she explained. "By fall 2006, only two students were working at Level 1. The continuity of this program makes all the difference in the world for our kids. Since every teacher uses *Reading Mastery Plus*, we all speak the same language as students move

### Milton-Freewater Unified School District 7; Milton-Freewater, OR

About the District:	
Grades:	K-12
Number of Students:	2,059
Test(s):	OSA
Reduced Price Lunch:	72%
About the Students:	
African American:	-
Caucasian:	49%
Hispanic:	50%
Asian:	-
Other:	1%
ELL	58%

**Figure 1**  
Percentage of Reading First Grade 3 Students Meeting or Exceeding State Reading Standards



Source: Oregon Statewide Assessment

from one classroom to the other. The children also know expectations are the same. They are asked to respond in a certain manner and know the appropriate time to do so, which means less disruption.”

Chesnut echoed that sentiment and added that another reason for student success is the program’s systematic approach to reading instruction and its strong oral language components, particularly in kindergarten and Grade 1.

“All teachers move in the same direction and use the same vocabulary while teaching, which means student transition from one classroom to another or from one reading group to another is seamless. The other piece that makes a

huge difference with regard to success is the extremely dedicated instructional staff at both schools. They are absolutely focused on the process.”

The Reading First program involves all students at Grove Elementary School, which is a Grade K-2 school in the district, and Grade 3 students at Freewater Elementary School, which is a Grade 3-5 school.

“When dedicated educators choose a strong core reading program like *Reading Mastery Plus*, and you combine that with the professional development and financial support that comes with being a Reading First school, the children are the ultimate winners,” Chesnut concluded.

## About Milton-Freewater Unified School District 7

Serving approximately 2,059 students in Grades K-12, this district’s student population is 49% Caucasian, 50% Hispanic, and 1% multicultural. Seventy-two percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and 58% of the Hispanic students are English-Language Learners (ELL). For more information about this district, go to [www.miltfree.k12.or.us](http://www.miltfree.k12.or.us).

## For More Information

If you would like to learn more about success with Direct Instruction programs in your school or district, please contact SRA at 1-888-SRA-4543. **ADL**

## Success Stories

### Delaware Charter School Students Maintain High Reading Scores

After opening its doors in 1997 to some of the state's most economically and educationally disadvantaged children, East Side Charter School in Wilmington, DE, has amassed a prestigious academic record. The school was recognized with a State Congressional Statement honoring student achievement in 2002. It also received the Title I Distinguished Schools Award in 2001, given to Title I schools that best demonstrate how educational programs can result in significant achievement of the school's most academically disadvantaged students. In 2004 it received a Pride of SRA Academic Recognition Award for showing dramatic academic success.

After adopting the Direct Instruction programs *Reading Mastery*, *Reasoning and Writing*, and *Spelling Mastery* school-wide in 1998, Grade 3 test scores on the reading portion of the Delaware Student Testing Program dramatically improved—from 20% of students meeting/exceeding state reading standards in 1999 to 83% in 2000.

By 2003, 100% of Grade 3 students (88% of whom came from low-income families) outscored every school in the state on standardized performance tests in both reading and math! In 2004 and 2005, the percentages dipped slightly, but Principal Will

Robinson said those scores were more consistent with previous year's scores.

"We look forward to yet another year when our students outscore every school in the state," Robinson said. "In the meantime, we're still very happy that our students continue to improve their reading skills each year."

#### Disadvantaged Children Find Success

Robinson said more than 75% of East Side Charter School students live in poverty with only one parent, few of whom completed any college education. Many children live in neighborhoods with high incidences of violence and crime, and some are without proper nutrition and health care.

Robinson stated, "Statistically our kids are considered at-risk, but we don't use the at-risk designation. Instead, we look at our kids and see the promise in their eyes."

Facing these social and academic circumstances, Robinson chose to implement Direct Instruction after he was hired as principal and executive director in 1998, one year after the school opened. "I used Direct Instruction programs successfully when I taught special education students in Baltimore and Wilmington," he explained. "So I didn't see why we couldn't use them with general education students."

Robinson was right. Five years after implementation, each child in Grade 3 met or exceeded state reading standards, achieving the highest score in the state. Now he shares success story after success story involving children who arrive at East Side Charter School reading one to two grade levels below average. After using Direct Instruction's Reading Mastery for six months, most of them are well on their way to reading on grade level. "SRA's programs help students understand what reading is all about. They go from being non-readers to avid readers—often reading well above grade level in a short period of time," Robinson said.

### Parental Involvement Equals Success

Parental involvement is a key factor to the charter school's success. The school requires parents to sign a mutual responsibility contract and contribute at least four hours of volunteer service each month. In addition, parents agree to attend PTA meetings, check homework each night, and read with their children at least 15 minutes a day. Students wear uniforms, attend school 11 months each year, and can participate in tutoring programs offered before and after school.

"Here we believe that every student, no matter where they come from, can read," Robinson said. "Not only can they read, but they can read well."

### About East Side Charter School

Established in 1997, East Side Charter School is a Title I school that provides education for children who are economically at-risk. Its goals are noteworthy: decrease the education gap between minority children and those from more prosperous surroundings; increase the number of students who

### *East Side Charter School; Wilmington, DE*

#### About the School:

Grades:	PreK-7
Number of Students:	160
Test(s):	DSTP
Reduced Price Lunch:	85%

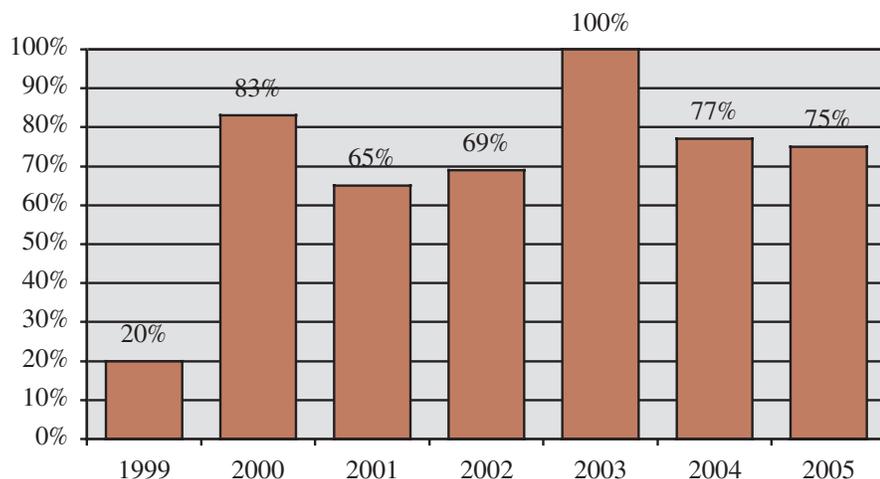
#### About the Students:

African American:	92%
Caucasian:	2%
Hispanic:	6%
Asian:	-
Other:	-
ELL	-

are prepared for high school; decrease the number of students who are labeled special education students; increase the number of minority students who accept the challenge of math and science disciplines; and create an atmosphere where no child will be left behind.

Serving more than 160 pupils in Grades PreK-6, the student population is 92% African American, 6% Hispanic, and 2% Caucasian. About 30% of the children reside in public housing with single female heads of household, and 85% are eligible for free or reduced-prices lunch, compared to a state average of 40%. **ADI**

**Figure 1**  
*East Side Charter School Percentage of Grade 3 Students Meeting or Exceeding State Reading Standards*



Source: Delaware Student Testing Program

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# Success Stories

## Direct Instruction Helps Native American School Change Course, Improve Reading

Every student at Chief Leschi School in Puyallup, WA, required reading remediation before SRA/McGraw-Hill's Direct Instruction was piloted in Grades 7-9 at the start of the 2003-04 school year. Teachers had not used research-based programs consistently across grade levels.

However, by the 2006-07 school year, only 30% of students needed it. Even more remarkable are students' reading scores. For example, the percentage of Grade 10 students meeting or exceeding state standards rose from 10% in 2003 (before Direct Instruction began) to 62% in 2006.

Assistant Principal Jennifer Pierce said Direct Instruction has completely changed the culture at Chief Leschi School.

"Direct Instruction impacts the way our school functions over all: the way our teachers teach and how our leadership team approaches and implements

curriculum instruction and assessment," she said.

"There's also been a huge change in student attitude," Pierce added.

"Before we started Direct Instruction, we had disengaged, passive learners. Now they are completely engaged and held accountable for their academic achievement. Direct Instruction has been at the heart of reform at our school, and I don't think we'd be functioning as well as we are today if we hadn't implemented its programs."

Now the following Direct Instruction programs are used school-wide: *Reading Mastery* in Grades K-6 (and with struggling middle school readers) and *Corrective Reading, Reasoning & Writing*, and *Spelling Through Morphographs* in Grades 4-12.

Pierce said one particular new student who didn't know the sounds of all the letters was placed in Grade 9 in fall 2005. He began with *Corrective Reading* decoding. By early spring, he was able to read out loud for the first time.

"Every adult in that room, including his mother, was nearly in tears because we knew the course of his life was changing," she said.

Celebrating the Native American culture is exceedingly important at Chief Leschi School. Pierce said Direct Instruction has helped in that regard too.

"The stronger our kids are academically, the more confident and motivated they are. Engaged, productive students connect culturally. They know we won't let them fail. We will do everything we can to make them successful. Direct Instruction has impacted and permeated every aspect of our school," she said.

Chief Leschi School received the South Puget Sound School of the Year Award for the 2006-07 school year from the University of Washington at

### Chief Leschi School; Puyallup, WA

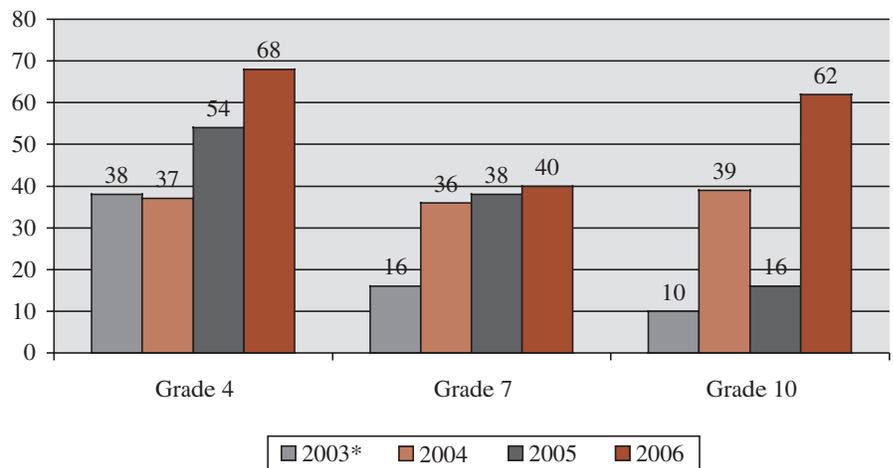
About the School:

Grades: K-12  
 Number of Students: 725  
 Test(s): WASL  
 Reduced Price Lunch: -

About the Students:

African American: -  
 Caucasian: -  
 Hispanic: -  
 Asian: -  
 Native American: 100%  
 ELL: -

**Figure 1**  
*Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Reading Standards*



Source: WASL

Tacoma. Based on academic improvement, this recognition allowed students and teachers to revel in their accomplishments.

“When you put your heart and soul into providing effective instruction,

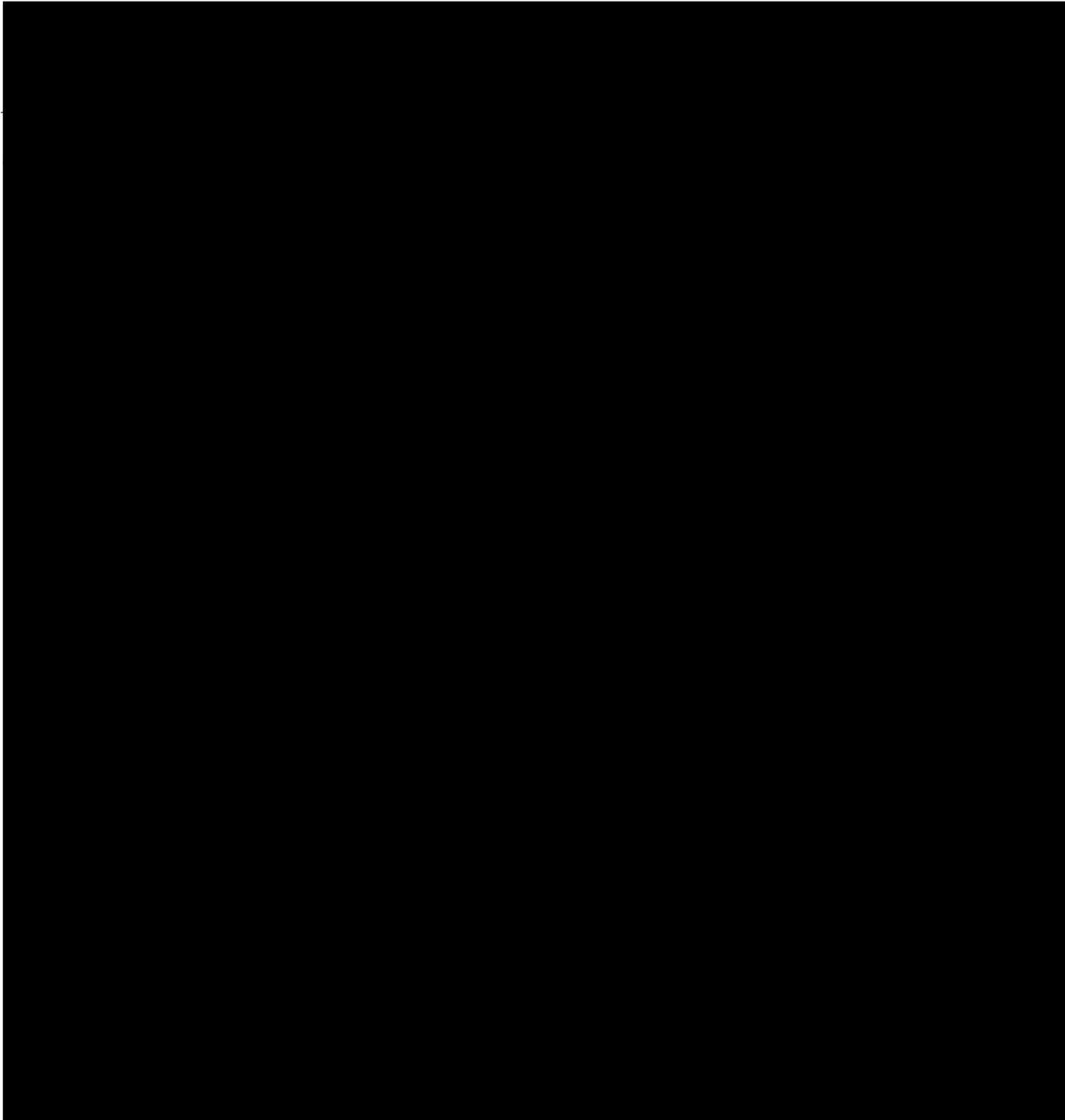
you can change the life course of a student,” Pierce said.

### **About Chief Leschi School**

Serving roughly 725 students in Grades K-12, this tribal school's popu-

lation is 100% Native American. All students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. For more information, please visit [www.leschischools.org](http://www.leschischools.org). *ADD*

ANGELA JONES and BILL BURSUCK, University of North Carolina Greensboro and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School



## *Using a Variation of Duet Reading to Increase the Reading Fluency of Two High School Students with Learning Disabilities*

With the publication of the report of the National Reading Panel (NRP), reading fluency has been more widely recognized as a key element in successful reading programs (NRP, 2000). The NRP considers fluency an “essential ingredient in successful reading development” and defines it as “the ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression” (NRP, 2000; p.1 & 5). The NRP report provides evidence that oral reading procedures, including frequent practice and feedback, have a significant impact on accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. According to Kuhn and Stahl (2003), “If children fail to make the transition to fluent reading, they will encounter significant difficulties in contracting meaning from the text” (p. 8).

Although fluency is generally thought of as an elementary grade issue, research has shown that it is a problem for large numbers of middle and high school students, particularly in urban areas (Devault & Joseph, 2004). Reading fluently is an especially important ability for secondary students because of the large quantities of text they must read for their classes. While the current emphasis in education is on evidence-based practices, relatively few studies have documented the effectiveness of fluency-based instruc-

tional strategies for use with middle and high school students with significant reading difficulties (Allinder, Dunse, Brunken, & Obermiller-Krolikowski, 2001; Archer, Gleason, & Vachon, 2003). The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of a reading fluency strategy called Duet Reading on the oral reading fluency of two African American high school students. Duet Reading (sometimes referred to as shared reading) is a fluency-building reading strategy originally developed by Zig Engelmann. The version used here was an adapted version of Engelmann’s that involved having two students with similar reading levels and oral reading rates reading the words of a graded passage together, with each student reading every other word. While we were unable to find research studies validating the effectiveness of Duet Reading, the components of Duet Reading as we conducted it incorporated a number of teaching strategies that had a strong research base such as repeated reading, peer-mediated practice, goal setting, and self-monitoring.

### *Method*

The students in this study were two African American male ninth-grade students, James and Robert, who were

identified as having learning disabilities in reading. They were enrolled full-time in a rural North Carolina high school that has a student population of 1,558 including 53% European American, 32% African American, 11% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 3% multi-racial and Native American. The school is considered an Equity Plus school because of the high percentage of students receiving free- and reduced-priced lunches.

The students shared similar achievement levels and public school experiences. James was initially identified as learning disabled in the first grade. His scores on both the Slosson Oral Reading test (SORT) and Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (WRMT) were within the fourth-grade range. James also scored below the basic level on his eighth-grade End of Grade (EOG) reading test. His teachers indicated that he worked very hard in the classroom, but had trouble on tasks that required extensive reading. Robert was initially identified as learning disabled in the fourth grade. His scores on both the SORT and WRMT were also within the fourth-grade range, and he scored below the basic level on his eighth-grade EOG reading test as well. Robert’s teachers indicated that despite his efforts and the support they provided, he was struggling to master the content of his classes. Both students were served in self-contained classrooms from the fourth through eighth grades, and found it challenging to meet the demands of the high school curriculum despite the support they received.

The Duet Reading sessions took place in the first author's office during each student's regularly scheduled Study Skills class. The first author was the teacher. Duet Reading was carried out three times a week for 15 to 20 minutes a session for a total of 10 weeks. The outcome measure was oral reading fluency or the number of words read correctly per minute on passages that initially corresponded with the students' independent reading level. Correct and incorrect reading rates were determined using the standard CBM reading protocol (Deno, Fuchs, Marston, & Shinn, 2001). Students were placed at the fourth-grade level, which was the highest level at which they were able to read passages with the 95% accuracy needed to conduct fluency training (Bursuck & Damer, 2007). The intervention began with passages at that reading level. As the students' rates on fourth-grade passages improved, fifth-grade-level passages were introduced. The reading passages used were Test of Oral Reading Fluency (TORF) progress monitoring passages along with additional passages the researcher located in other high-interest low vocabulary books at her school. Readability of the passages was verified by using the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test.

The Duet Reading strategy began by having Robert and James select a passage for their reading session from a group of passages that had been previously determined to be at their independent reading level. Student choice was introduced as one way to motivate the students to do their best reading. Once the passage for the day was selected, each student engaged in an unrehearsed or "cold" read with the first author. The cold read was for 1 minute, and the words correct and errors per minute were charted by the students and progress was noted. No feedback was provided during the cold reads. Duet Reading followed the cold read. Duet Reading involved having Robert and James read the chosen daily passage together, three times,

each for a minute, with each student reading every other word. The students were told that the goal was to read the passage faster each time without increasing their errors. The teacher kept track of the words they read correctly per minute each time they read so she was able to tell them when they had beaten their previous score. During each reading, no feedback for missed words was provided. If the students did not pronounce a word within 3 seconds, the teacher supplied the missed word and then

*Both students made noteworthy gains in fluency and were even able to extend those gains to material that was initially too difficult for them.*

pointed to the other student to read the next word. However, at the end of each duet reading, a brief drill was provided on any missed words. Following Duet Reading, each student read individually to the teacher. While not recorded, students' reading rates were calculated and shared with each of them as a motivational strategy.

A simple AB design was used to establish the effect of Duet Reading on oral reading fluency. While the possible influence of extraneous variables (maturation, changes in environment, teacher attention, etc.) cannot be ruled out with this design, school conditions prevented us from using a more rigorous design. An independent observer was chosen to establish the treatment fidelity of Duet Reading using a checklist of key Duet Reading components. The percent of Duet Reading steps completed was recorded. The same observer also checked reliability for the oral reading fluency measure. Reliability was calculated by dividing the number of agree-

ments by the number of agreements plus disagreements (i.e., total number of words attempted in the session, mispronunciations). Fidelity of treatment data were collected for 35% of the sessions and reliability data were collected by tape recording for 30% of the sessions. Both treatment fidelity and reliability averaged 95%.

## Results

Figures 1 and 2 show student performance for each Duet Reading session; average correct and error rates for each student for baseline and intervention are also shown on the graphs. A visual analysis of student performance across individual sessions as well as an inspection of the average student performance across phases shows consistent progress over time for both students; words read correctly per minute increased while student errors per minute remained low. Note that the graphed data reflect performance on fourth-grade passages from sessions 8 through 23. For the remainder of the sessions, the students read more difficult passages at the fifth-grade level, yet still managed to increase their reading rates. Also noteworthy is that the results reflect student performance on cold reads. This means that the increase in student performance was on unrehearsed passages. Finally, the error rates show that as the students' rates increased, their accuracy remained high, an important outcome of any reading fluency intervention.

Student satisfaction with Duet Reading was also measured using student interviews conducted following the conclusion of Duet Reading. The results of the interviews showed that both James and Robert were extremely proud of their efforts. Both indicated that they felt more confident about reading and less apprehensive about reading in front of their peers than prior to the beginning of the study.

## Discussion

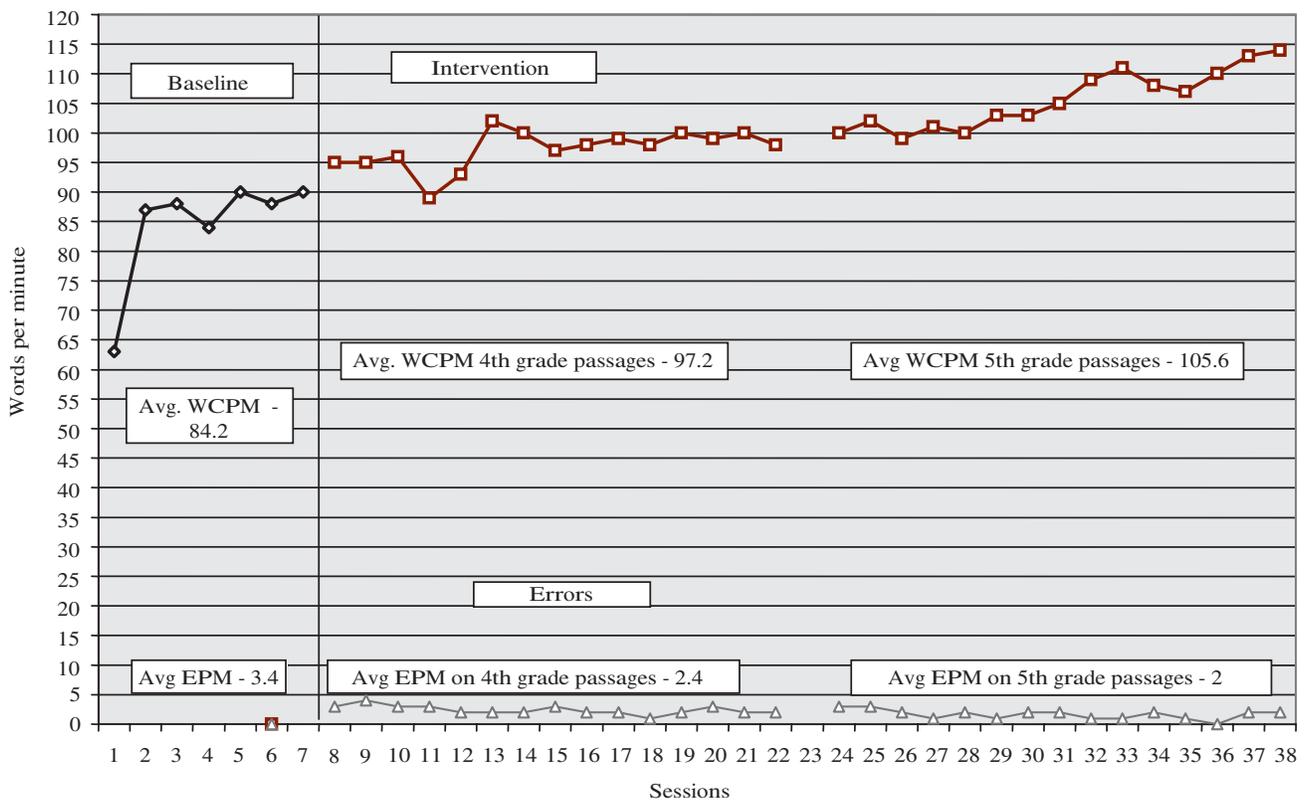
The results of our study revealed that both students made noteworthy gains in fluency and were even able to extend those gains to material that was initially too difficult for them. These results are particularly impressive given the relatively brief duration of the intervention. We think that there were a number of reasons for the effectiveness of our adaptation of Duet Reading. First, Duet Reading uses repeated reading and the missed word drill, two tried and true interventions for increasing reading accuracy and fluency (NRP, 2000). Second, Engelmann has suggested that the reading-every-other-word feature of Duet Reading trains students to automatically look ahead to the next word. This feature may have also had a positive effect on

our students' fluency. Another feature of our Duet Reading was student choice of passages. The sense of autonomy that choice affords (Dally, Garbacz, Olson, Persampieri, & Ni, 2006) may be particularly motivating for high school students who rarely are allowed to choose what they read. Choice may have also motivated the students by allowing them to be stakeholders in their own success. It must also be noted that careful consideration went into choosing both students. Robert and James had similar reading needs and experiences, and shared a strong sense of camaraderie. These may have been important factors in the effectiveness of our peer-mediated version of Duet Reading. Finally, the Duet Reading incorporated elements of goal-setting and self-monitoring.

The goal-setting, which involved challenging students to improve upon their previous rates, seemed to increase their motivation, sense of competition, and desire to succeed. Charting their own individual progress before each session may have given them another opportunity to take ownership in their achievements or assess their failures.

Although the Duet Reading used in this study shows promise, the simple AB design employed does not allow us to conclude that Duet Reading was responsible for the increases in fluency. The fact that only two students were involved also limits the findings. A future study using a stronger multiple-baseline design with more students is currently in the planning stage. Another limitation is that the

Figure 1  
James



EPM - Errors per minute  
WCPM - Words correct per minute

Figures 1 & 2. The words correct per minute and average errors per minute for the baseline and Duet Reading intervention on passages for Robert and James. Sessions 8 - 22 were conducted with fourth-grade passages and sessions 23 - 37 used fifth-grade passages.

impact of the intervention on student reading comprehension and performance in their general education classes was also not measured, though anecdotal information collected from one of Robert's teachers indicated that he was attempting to read more often in class. Ultimately, the goal of any fluency study is to improve student performance in comprehension, across numerous settings, and this will be addressed in our future work. Finally, as there were no follow-up assessments after the conclusion of the study, the extent to which the students maintained their fluency gains is unknown.

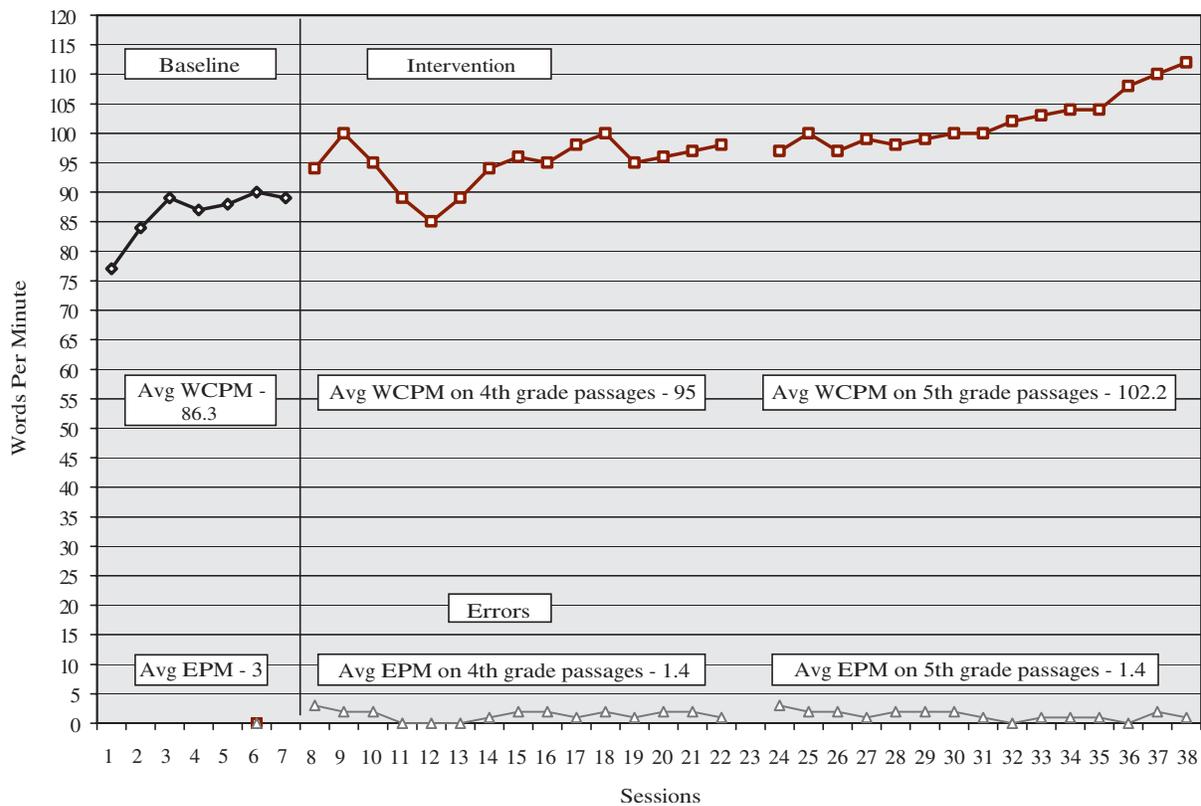
As stated at the beginning of this article, interventions are needed to improve the reading fluency of high school students with learning disabili-

ties. Our adapted version of Duet Reading shows promise, but it remains for future research to move it from the ranks of "promising" to "scientifically-based." *ADL*

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Figure 2  
Robert



EPM - Errors per minute  
WCPM - Words correct per minute

Figures 1 & 2. The words correct per minute and average errors per minute for the baseline and Duet Reading intervention on passages for Robert and James. Sessions 8 - 22 were conducted with fourth-grade passages and sessions 23 - 37 used fifth-grade passages.

## Duet Reading: Recommended Practices

In addition to timed reading, slow readers benefit greatly from *duet reading*. For duet reading, you and the student sit side by side, looking at the same copy of what is to be read. You point to all words. You and the student take turns reading words. For the first round, you read the first word; the student reads the next word; you read the next word, and so forth.

This technique is like magic for very slow readers, particularly those who have various kinds of superstitious reading behavior, like pausing a second or more before saying the word, or touching under the word several times before reading it, or frequent self corrects, or looking at you after every word to see if you approve of the response.

Note that the peer option absolutely will not work for duet reading. There are far too many requirements for the person directing the reading—being able to read accurately and fast, being able to point to words with proper timing, and being able to identify and correct mistakes.

The main reason duet reading is so effective is that it completely removes the context in which the student has read and presents a task that is more like reading isolated words than reading connected text. The task is easier than reading isolated words, however, because there are context cues and there is a great deal of modeling. For example, if the word “cat” appears in the first sentence, and it is your word to read, the student receives a model of reading that word correctly. When it appears again as the student’s word, the student is less likely to wonder what the word is or worry about reading it correctly. Also, duet reading is designed so the student is looking ahead while you are reading a word. This is a behavior that the student must learn to read fluently.

### Procedure

Perhaps the best way to do duet reading is to point to each word just before it is to be read. The instant you’ve finished saying your word, you touch under the next word. The moment the student reads that word, quickly point to your word and read it. Then quickly point to the next word.

Do not pause more than an instant before reading your words. Do not adjust your pace to the student’s pace. Instead, do not hurry the student but

point to the next word and read it the moment the student reads a word.

Praise the student for improvement, which you and the student will probably notice immediately.

After reading an entire selection in this manner, re-read it with the student reading the first word and you reading the next. At the end of the second reading, the student would have read all the words in the selection.

After doing the duet reading with you pointing, change the format so the student points. At first, this may be a difficult task. If so, don’t require the student to point as the entire selec-



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tion is read, only possibly during the first couple of sentences. If a student has great difficulty, you could read all the words of the story as the student points. Vary the pace some from sentence to sentence, so the student has to listen, rather than just move along each line of text at a fixed rate.

After the student is fairly reliable about reading and pointing, change the format so that the student reads the first word. Also, change the number of words you read and the number the student reads. The simplest format is for you to read two words and the student to read the next two. (It's sim-

pler because the pattern is the same, two for you, two for the student.)

Next, you could change the procedure so you read one word and the student reads three. After 4-8 sessions in which the student reads words accurately at the rate of around 50 words a minute or more, drop the duet reading. *ADI*

BOB DIXON



## Give Me That Old Time Behavioral Objective

Many years ago, I found myself criticizing behavioral objectives. I'm talking specifically here of behavioral objectives as first described by Mager and expanded upon by Waina. "Good" behavioral objectives had to specify the conditions under which a student would perform, to use a descriptive action verb, and to give the criteria for determining whether a given objective had been met. Here's an example of such an objective: *The sixth-graders will correctly spell this week's words in no more than 5 minutes with at least 90 percent accuracy.*

What was my beef with such highly specific learning objectives? One problem I had was not directly related to the construction of an objective, but rather, to the attitude so many people had toward them: If you constructed an objective correctly, you were just about finished. There used to be a pervasive attitude that if you had a good set of objectives, something magical would take place to ensure that students would be successful. I used to read and hear a lot about the power of objectives, but couldn't find much on the magical part of the process.

I also used to argue that most highly specific objectives *weren't specific enough*. The spelling objective above isn't so bad *except* that the writer probably meant "write with correct

spelling" rather than just spell, which could be oral. And will the words be presented in the order in which the students have been studying them all week? And should this really be the goal? What about including words from previous weeks' work? My precision teaching friends rightfully wouldn't be that thrilled with a goal of 90%. (Imagine if a student misspelled 10%

of all the words in a piece of writing.) If the goal is narrow minded, then it doesn't matter how well the objective is written.

Some objectives are okay, but humorous, due to the tendency writers have to using dangling participles in order to get all the essential characteristics of the objective into a single sentence: *Without the aid of an atlas or other visualization references, the student will be able to complete an outline map of Pennsylvania, including the major cities and rivers introduced in class with 90% accuracy.* Personally, I think the teacher should be 100% accurate when introducing rivers and cities in Pennsylvania.

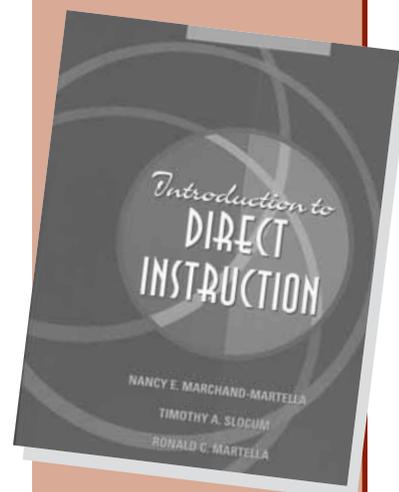
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I used to argue that if you really wanted to get specific about student outcomes, then the first thing you should do is *write the test*. With the test or quiz in hand from the beginning, you could just say, "All the students will get 100% on this test," and if rate is important, then you could add, "in under 30 minutes." Outcome assessments are always going to be highly specific because they illustrate exactly what the student is going to have to *do*. That is, the actual *tasks* that the student has to perform are obvious in an assessment. Verbal descriptions of tasks are often ambiguous, and no two tasks are created equal.

I've more or less implied that the actual outcome test *and* some verbal description make learning outcomes about as specific as you can get. For example, in the many cases when generalization is the goal, you couldn't tell by looking at the test whether generalization was being assessed. A specification of the outcome needs some indication of which items, if any, the student had encountered before instruction.

I should add that despite some misgivings, I liked behavioral objectives for the simple reason that if we were going to try to take students to some

particular place, it was a good idea to decide where that place was before starting the journey. In the '60s, when behavioral objectives became popular, there was a strong tendency in the schools to take students on long journeys without destinations.

What I never envisioned while picking nits over behavioral objectives was our current movement: *standards*. No one (like Mager in the '60s) has established any criteria for "good" standards, which might be the reason that there aren't any good standards. Standards are "things" written by committees whose members hope to sound erudite. I could go on and on about how standards get written (at least in my native Washington State), but if we look at examples of actual state standards, we see that it doesn't matter how they were written. They are much, much worse than useless; they are harmful. Take a look at some kindergarten standards for language arts:

- Texas: Choose and adapt spoken language appropriate to the audience including appropriate volume and rate. (*What????*)
- New Jersey: Participate in conversations with peers and adults. (*Presumably, lots of kids in New Jersey are going to do well on this one, irrespective of whether or not they go to school.*)
- Florida: Connect thoughts and oral language. (*Although I've heard a politician or two from Florida who failed to connect thought with their oral language, for the most part, it's sort of challenging to not connect thought to oral language.*)
- Ohio: (a) Choose a topic for writing and (b) determine audience. (*If kids in kindergarten are doing this, by second grade, the kids in Ohio should be writing publishable novels.*)
- Illinois: Demonstrate focus, organization, elaboration, and integration in written compositions (e.g., short stories, letters, essays, reports). (*Those low socio-economic kindergartners in Illinois are going to be able to write their way right out of poverty when they meet this standard.*)

## *DI-ANNOUNCE Electronic List*

An electronic list is now available: DI-ANNOUNCE. As its name indicates, DI-ANNOUNCE is an electronic list for announcements on resources for those studying or implementing Direct Instruction. List topics include the following:

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- meetings, conferences, and workshops on DI;
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- new DI products and resources;
- grant opportunities or awards for DI research or implementation;
- job opportunities for DI researchers or practitioners;
- sources of data on student performance for analysis or distribution.

Note that DI-ANNOUNCE postings are limited to ANNOUNCEMENTS. The list is NOT a discussion list, and it is moderated. Any replies, jokes, or other off-task messages will be rejected. There is an on-line, web-based archive of postings for later reference and retrieval. In this way, the list is designed to be a streamlined tool for communicating information on the most critical developments in the field of Direct Instruction.

To subscribe, send a message to [join-DI-ANNOUNCE@lyris.nifdi.org](mailto:join-DI-ANNOUNCE@lyris.nifdi.org).

You will then receive a "welcome" message with additional information about the list. You can also go to <http://lyris.nifdi.org/> to see an archive of past announcements sent to the list, including the "welcome" message.

The list launched last October. You are invited to join the list and send announcements as appropriate. Feel free to call Kurt Engelmann at the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI) via 877.485.1973 toll-free or email [kurt@nifdi.org](mailto:kurt@nifdi.org) if you have any questions about the list.

- Georgia: Increase vocabulary to reflect a growing range of interests and knowledge. *(Does this mean that in order to demonstrate that the kindergarteners' range of interests (and range of knowledge) is growing, they should learn vocabulary?)*

OK. One more.

- Minnesota: Follow print (words and text) from left to right and top to bottom. *(Students should certainly do this when learning to read. My question is this: Before Minnesota developed this standard, was anyone there not teaching kids to read English from left to right and top to bottom? Apparently. The people who sat on that committee and collectively decided to write this out as a standard for the children of Minnesota—did they feel literate and scholarly and innovative when the final vote was tallied? I hope this standard makes a significant contribution toward correcting the problem with the way people used to teach reading in Minnesota.)*

These standards are harmful because they are, for the most part, meaningless verbal detritus on the one hand, but textbook publishers live and die off them, on the other. Even with respect to clearly incomprehensible standards, publishers have to come up with *something* to stick in a textbook that helps

**Figure 1**  
Standards (Goals, Objectives) → → ■ → → Assessment

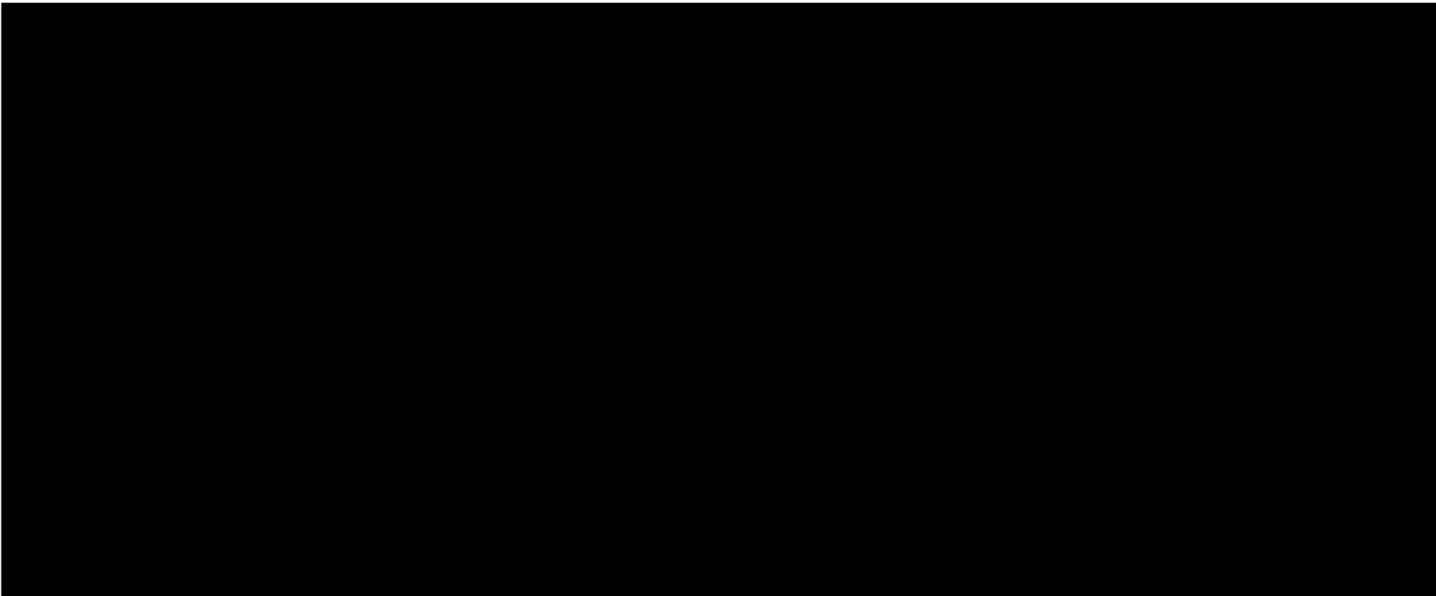
create the illusion that the textbook is aligned with some set of standards. I am empathetic with the publishers ... to a point. The standards are a major incentive for the publishers to produce crap. Over the years, I've worked with several major publishers, and none of them has aspired to produce crap. They do it, though, because the market demands that they do it.

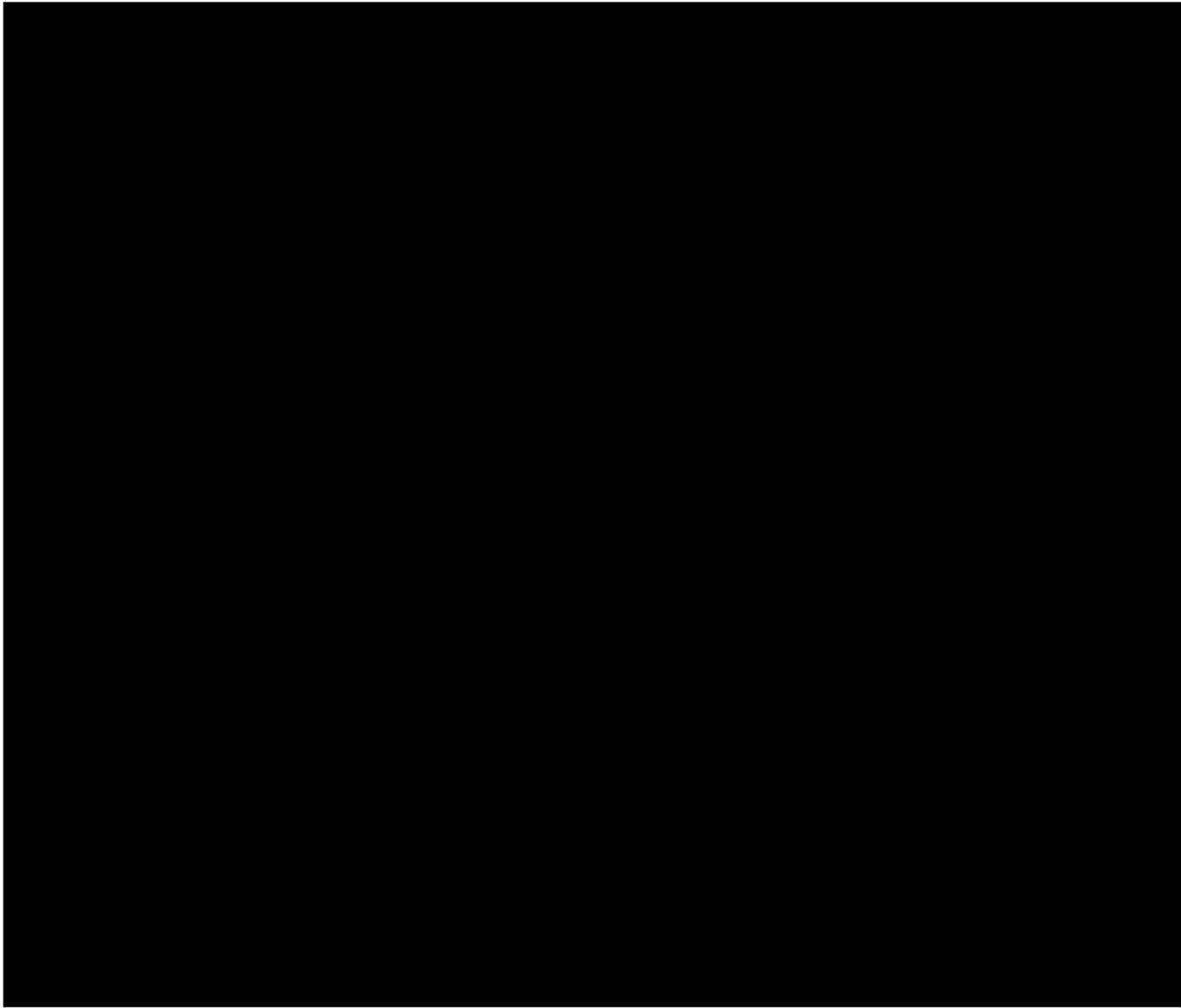
And standards and state tests, taken together, are *very* harmful. First, because the standards are so bad, it is nearly impossible to assess them. In short, the standards and the state tests don't align, except in the most meaningless and specious ways. But here is the biggest problem of them all, and the reason the tests and standards are so damaging. IF the standards were really "good" according to some criteria that would make sense to the average educated person on the street, and if they were precise enough to be aligned with assessment tools that were actually technically sound, widespread failure would continue, unabated. Figure 1 shows Doug Carnine's illustration of the problem.

The black box in the middle is the magic by which teachers start out with goals for students and end up with students performing brilliantly on tests that are valid and reliable. The black box is the instruction, and the states and just about everyone else are so clueless about instruction that they give it very little attention. With the *best* standards and the *best* assessments, the system is doomed to failure if, at the center of it all, we don't have the best instruction. As it stands now, the standards are, for the most part, ridiculous, and few if any of the state assessments have been certified as valid and reliable.

Dropping standards altogether and going back to behavioral objectives would be a gigantic improvement. For the most part, behavioral objectives are comprehensible. For the most part, they are adequately specific as the basis for creating technically sound assessments. The entire effort to make such a reform would be nearly useless if we don't attend first and foremost to the magic in the black box. ~~ADI~~

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## *DI Feeder System Closes the Achievement Gap in Gering, NE*

As in many rural districts throughout the country, the eight-school district in Gering, NE, serving about 2,000 students, suffered from an achievement gap in 2004. About half of all second-grade students were reading below grade-level expectations as measured by the DIBELS fluency measures, and the difference between ethnic groups was large. Only 36% of Gering's second-grade Hispanic students were meeting the Oral Reading Fluency

benchmark as compared to 59% of the second-grade Caucasian students. The situation at Gering Junior High was similar, with eighth-grade students scoring well below the national average on ACT's EXPLORE College Readiness Test.

The district administration took decisive action to correct the literacy problem. The district received a \$1.2 million Reading First grant and started

implementing Direct Instruction reading and language (*Reading Mastery, Language for Learning, Language for Thinking and Reasoning & Writing*) for all students in grades kindergarten through third grade with the assistance of the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI) during the 2004-05 school year. NIFDI provided comprehensive on-site and off-site implementation support, including weekly analysis of student performance data and problem-solving conference calls. Students were placed in the appropriate level in DI programs. Teachers were trained in the specific DI formats that met their

students' needs. NIFDI implementation support providers and school-based coaches provided coaching and feedback to teachers in all classrooms.

After the first year, the district expanded the program to include all students in grade 4. In the third year, fifth grade was added in the elemen-

tary schools and sixth grade at the junior high school where students were tested and placed in the appropriate level of *Corrective Reading* or *Reading Mastery* (level 5 or 6).

After three years of implementing DI, the results were striking. In the elementary schools, Hispanic students

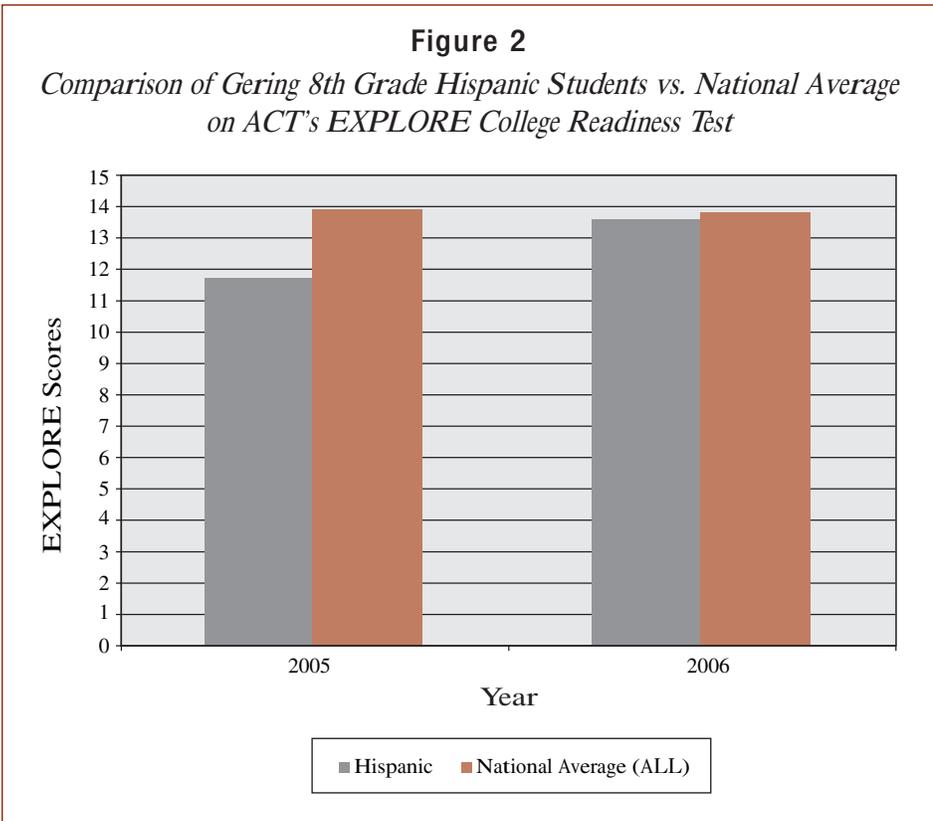
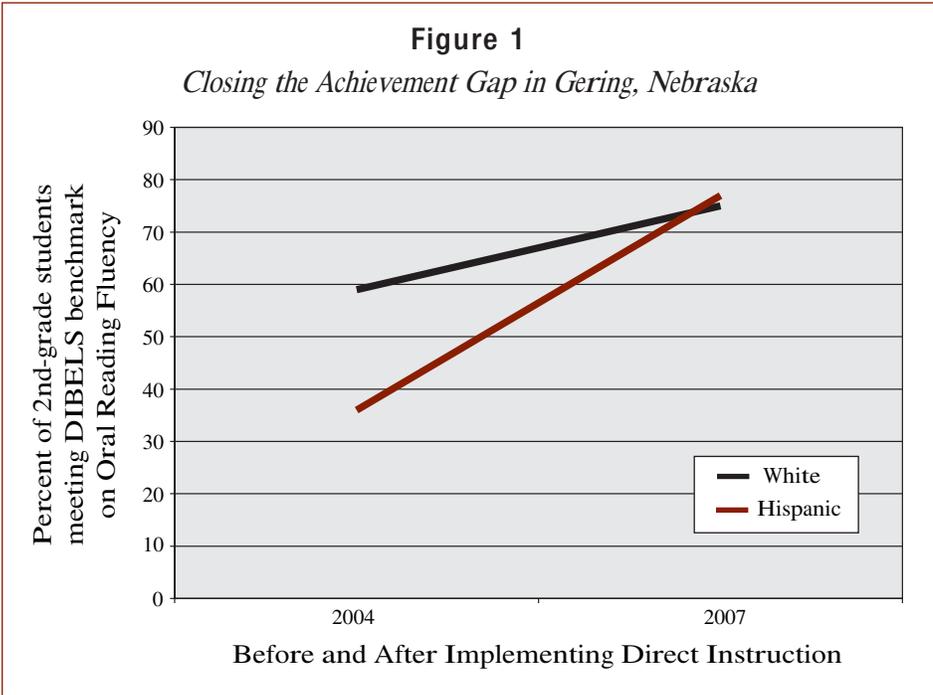
outperformed their Caucasian peers with 77% of the second-grade Hispanic students meeting the ORF Benchmark to 75% percent of the Caucasian students (see Figure 1). While the growth of both groups is impressive, it is even more impressive that the achievement gap was actually closed in only 3 years.

The impact of implementing DI was also felt in the upper grades where after only one academic year and 2 months of DI, the eighth-grade Hispanic students had an average score of 13.6 on the EXPLORE test, just 0.2 off the national average of 13.8. This was up from 11.7 the year prior (see Figure 2). The change in performance was also reflected in the sharp decline in the use of the *Corrective Reading* program, which was widespread in the first year of using DI at the junior high. After two years of implementation, *Corrective Reading* was used in only a couple of classrooms with very small groups.

The success in Gering has led to the dissemination of the DI model in Nebraska. Now over a dozen other schools implement the comprehensive Direct Instruction model. Many other schools have added parts of the DI model to other core programs. For example, all Reading First schools in Nebraska use *Language for Learning* for early language skill development.

The effect of DI in Gering is the subject of a film that should be completed this fall by the Palfreman Film Group. The film uses the example of Gering to show how districts can accelerate student success at the middle and elementary school levels by building an effective feeder system employing the Direct Instruction methodology for students at both levels.

For more information on the film, contact the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI) at 1-877-485-1973. For more information about the Gering Public School District, visit [www.geringschools.net](http://www.geringschools.net). *ADI*



# Review of Amy's Game: The Concealed Structure of Education,

by Roger F. Bass, Ph.D.

Roger Bass's book, *Amy's Game* (Book-Surge Publishing, 2007; www.book-surge.com), does a great disservice to all of the "research" quacks who extract policy implications and instructional "best practices" from anecdotes and opinions; the education bureaucracy hacks who devise endless rules and procedures designed to protect their backsides and ensure that they always have jobs, while crushing the spirit of well-meaning teachers; the self-anointed gurus who mistake their windy eructations<sup>1</sup> for the voice of G-d; and the self-appointed "leaders" who infect education with political agendas and ideologies while pretending to work for the good of children and our nation.

It's not likely that Dr. Bass's book will be well received by the education establishment—which prefers dreamy rhetoric and self-congratulations to hard fact and self-criticism. Dr. Bass reveals too clearly that the education establishment (schools of education, departments of public instruction, administrators on the "way up," publishers, "innovators" pushing each next "initiative") has neither intelligence, knowledge, morality, nor common sense, and could never wear enough clothing to hide its defects.

Yet, Dr. Bass's book is neither a diatribe nor rant—mere sound and fury. It is a careful documentation of the devastation of a little girl with autism, whose life trajectory was not the natural course of a disease or disorder, but was the tragic and unnecessary result of the relentless imposition on her of untested methods (as well as methods

that research had already shown to be ineffective); education theories ("pedagogies") that were nothing more than the preferences and fantasies of their inventors; "teaching techniques" so bizarre and destructive (but promoted and institutionalized) that they appear to have been the invention of a Spanish Inquisition run by the Marx Brothers; and the refusal to use curriculum materials and methods that had already been shown to work.

Dr. Bass provides readers (families, teachers, education students, and administrators) with an account of Amy's "education" that is so beautifully written (nearly poetic in many places), so detailed, and so clearly

guided by a moral position (that educators are responsible for the outcomes of what they do with or to students) that readers will be moved to rage and near tears. And this could be enough to justify the book. But Dr. Bass goes much, much farther. For example, he shows:

1. How fads are packaged, promoted, and sold. In doing so, he shows that education fads are not merely an example of someone pushing untested methods, but are a real industry.
2. The institutionalization of logical fallacies (more generally, anti-reason) in evaluating claims of effectiveness; e.g., rejecting hard data in favor of anecdotes and testimonies; using assessment data to blame low achievement on students rather than on instruction; using qualitative data (e.g., teachers' portfolios) rather than demonstrations of teaching to determine teacher skill; mistaking skill at using computer software whose

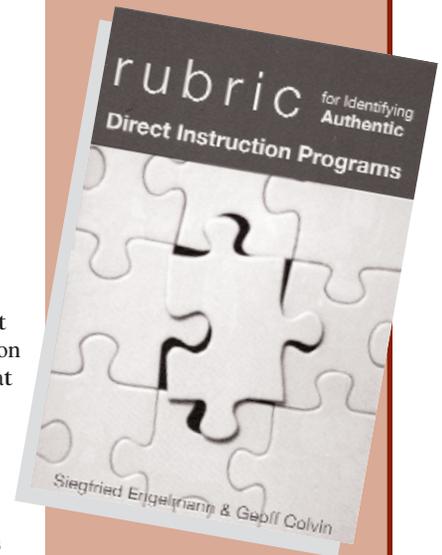
Now available from ADI

## *Rubric for Identifying Authentic Direct Instruction Programs*

Siegfried Engelmann & Geoff Colvin

The purpose of this document is to articulate and illustrate most of the major principles or axioms that are followed in the development of Direct Instruction programs. This information permits a critic to look at material and judge whether it is true Direct Instruction or some form of imitation that does not adhere to the full set of axioms that characterize true DI. It shows the level of detail associated with what students are told, how they are tested, what kind of practice is provided, and how the material is reviewed and expanded from one lesson to the next.

*Direct Instruction programs have an impressive track record for producing significant gains in student achievement for all children. This book provides the reader with an understanding of the critical details involved in developing these effective and efficient programs.* — Doug Carine, Ph.D., Professor, University of Oregon



Cost:

\$15.00 list

\$12.00 member price

To order, see page 38

<sup>1</sup> Acts or instances of belching.

instructional effects were not tested (e.g., on addition) for skill at the software content.

3. How state departments of education, publishers, and organizations that certify teachers are in collusion with the “Fadsters.” Each group supports and protects the others.
4. How the education establishment creates the illusion of teacher quality and district accountability via fast-track credentialing and untested “professional development.”
5. How the logical inadequacies in faddish curriculum materials (e.g., fuzzy math) are the same as the logical inadequacies involved in research, research claims, selection of materials, and explanations

(excuses) for school failure. In this sense, Dr. Bass documents the irrationality that is the very infrastructure of education.

6. How mediocre, poor, and unqualified college students easily become licensed to teach, while altruistic, motivated, and intelligent students are overwhelmed with professorial propagandizing and leave college with no idea how to teach.

In addition to documenting and describing the institutionalized irrationality, the self-serving rhetoric, rules, and procedures, and the destructive practices of the education establishment, Dr. Bass provides readers with effective alternatives. These include:

1. Basic methods of instruction.
2. Useful assessments of students, schools, and districts.
3. How administrators can improve the quality of schools.
4. What parents should look for and what questions they should ask.
5. Guidelines for judging the adequacy of research methods and the credibility of claims.

In summary, this book is a must read. It is the best—most comprehensive, well-documented, passionate and yet rational—critique of education that I have read. It could be a guidebook for serious reform. *ADI*

JEN NIFER LUOMA, Principal, Kennedy Elementary School

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## How Reading First Changed Our World

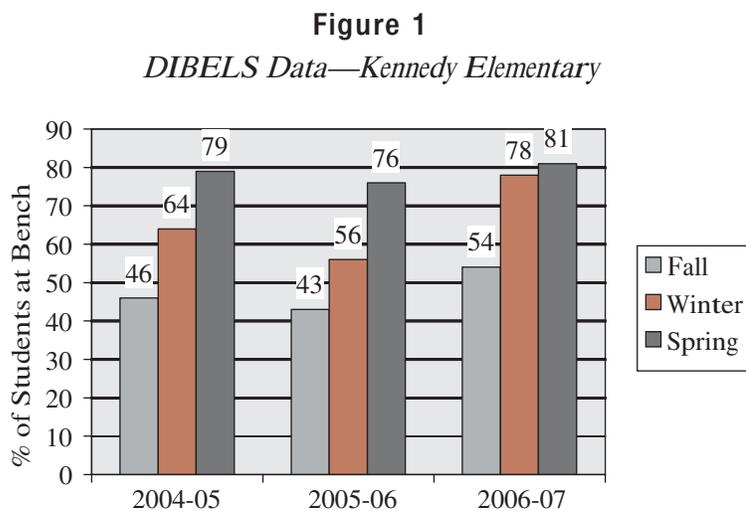
Kennedy Elementary is one of six K-6 schools in Butte, MT. Kennedy has a population of about 300 students and is a Title I school, with around 65% of the students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Due to Kennedy's economics, we have a high transient rate. During the 2006-07 school year, over 20% of our students transferred in and out. Unfortunately, our students also begin school with few skills. On DIBELS (Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills) in the fall of 2006, 48% of our incoming kindergarteners were considered *intensive*. Our record of poor test scores qualified us to apply for a Reading First grant in 2003, and in the fall of 2004, we became a Reading First school.

Early in the fall of 2004, Kennedy's test scores came in from the previous spring. Only 64% of our fourth-graders scored proficient on the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills), and on our state test, the MontCAS, only 32% were proficient. At this point, we had been using *Reading Mastery* for about two

years in grades K-3, but as we became involved in the Reading First grant, we realized that we did not have fidelity to the *Reading Mastery* program. The Kennedy staff was working hard, but just not on the right things.

With the framework of Reading First, the first year we worked mainly on fidelity to the curriculum, making

decisions based upon data, and making sure that students mastered the curriculum before they moved on. We did a lot of professional development and hired a reading coach. We extended the learning time for our students to a 90-minute reading block with a 30-minute intervention block in the afternoon. We changed the curriculum and added *Reading Mastery* to fourth grade as well. We were focused and had our task and vision working in unison.



After much hard work, spring of the first year finally came. On DIBELS, we started out with 46% of K-3 students at benchmark, and ended the year with 79% at benchmark (see Figure 1). The staff and I celebrated and hoped that our next set of state scores would reflect all of our hard work. They did. On the ITBS, our fourth-grade students scored 82% proficient, while on the state MontCAS, we were up to 84% proficient from 32%, as shown in Figure 2. We were still not satisfied, but this was better. After one year of implementing research-based practices and *Reading Mastery* with fidelity, we had improved. Other schools in the district were saying, if Kennedy can do it, we certainly can!

In our second year of Reading First, 2005-06, we began with 43% of our K-3 students hitting benchmark on DIBELS. We ended the year with 76% hitting benchmark. This was not as good as our first year, but not bad from where we had come. On the ITBS we were up to 90% of our students being proficient, and 84% proficient on our state MontCAS. We were delighted with the progress of our students. Not only were more students reaching benchmark, but our intensive groups were declining each year.

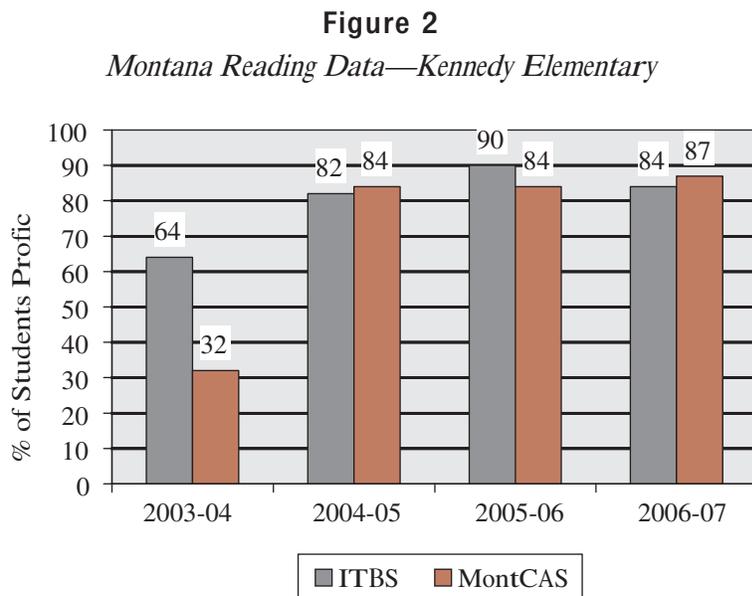
Kennedy began the 2006-07 school year with 54% of our K-3 students at benchmark on DIBELS. We ended the year with 81% of our K-3 students at benchmark. On the ITBS and MontCAS state tests, we scored 84% and 87% proficient respectively.

Robert Fulgrum wrote, "All I ever really needed to know I learned in kindergarten." I believe that he needs to add "learn to read" to his list. Our kindergarten students are amazing readers, and I attribute our school's success to their early success. The *Reading Mastery* program has given teachers the components needed to get our kindergarten students to benchmark by the end of the school year, regardless of the number of skills with which they enter. Each year our students build on those foundational skills using the *Reading Mastery* program and techniques. We now implement *Reading Mastery* K-6, with many of our students finishing the program by fourth grade.

Our state Reading First director, Debbie Hunsaker, put together Figure 3, which compares Kennedy Elementary to other Reading First schools with like demographics in the Western Region. Kennedy is School N. During that probe we only had 23% of our

kindergarten students coming in as intensive. Unfortunately that number has been increasing each year, but that does not cause us to lower our standards. At Kennedy we are proud of our hard work, both students and staff, and committed to making each child achieve to the best of his or her ability.

*Initial training and ongoing in-class coaching services were provided by Molly Blakely, Ed.D., President of Educational Resources, Inc. In addition, Kennedy Elementary has a full-time on-site coach who provides continuous coaching and training to the staff. ADL*



**Figure 3**  
*Kennedy Elementary (School N) Compared to Other Reading First Schools*

School	% Intensive K	% Benchmark K-3
School A	62	40
School B	56	58
School C	51	45
School D	44	63
School E	44	48
School F	40	61
School G	36	62
School H	33	61
School I	29	77
School J	29	52
School K	28	74
School L	27	61
School M	24	81
School N	24	83
School O	23	62
School P	22	50
School Q	19	76
School R	17	84
School S	0	89

## Fixing Motivation Problems

In one sense, motivating students is like correcting mistakes. Like correcting it involves applying rules and responding to the specific things students do. It's different from reading a script because the script provides a fixed sequence. Responding requires knowing various rules and applying them when students behave in certain ways.

Teaching teachers how to become effective at reinforcing and motivating students is very time consuming. Some teachers just don't get it because they persist in using a lock-step routine rather than applying different practices based on what the students do. For example, a teacher requires students to "sit tall, look at the book, and respond on signal." The teacher presents these rules like a script and firms the students on saying the rule. In the same way, this teacher follows rules about mastery. If students make more than one mistake on an exercise, the teacher corrects by saying the correct answer, repeating the task the students missed, then returning to the beginning of the exercise and repeating it.

On paper it sounds reasonable. In practice, however, the teacher at one extreme may unintentionally use the various rules and techniques to assure that the students will engage in endless repetition of the same task. If a student does not follow the rule about sitting tall, the teacher corrects the mistake: "Jamie, you are not sitting tall. Sit tall." Then, most probably, she returns to the beginning of the exercise and manages to find some other problem that she corrects and returns to the beginning of the exercise.

This teacher does not ask functional questions about what she does, ques-

tions like, "Do these students really understand the material I am presenting or do they need more help and practice?" For her, it is simply a question of reducing management to reasons for returning to the beginning of the exercise.

At the other extreme is the teacher who accepts wrong answers, does not attend to whether the students follow along as a student reads aloud, and does not respond to the material or to the students' performance *as if they are important*. This teacher is not able to achieve student mastery because the established routines are not based on discriminations that are relevant to attaining mastery and to motivating students.

Changing these teachers to become effective must be done in the classroom as the teachers teach.

What can be done outside the classroom is to teach the rules and discriminations that they will need to apply to classroom situations. Two of the basic principles teachers have to learn are that something is a motivator only if students respond to it positively, and something is a punisher if students avoid or simply tolerate it with no enthusiasm.

Here are the three basic rules that underpin good reinforcement practices:

Rule 1: Always assume that there is a basis in evidence for the conception the students have about schoolwork and specific activities. If students behave as if the word-attack part of the lesson is aversive, there is a basis in fact for their belief. The word-attack portion of the lesson has become aversive to them. The solution is to find out why and correct it.

Rule 2: Always treat motivation problems as instructional problems. The game is not simply to change students' "affect" but to change their knowledge about themselves and the activities they work on.

Rule 3: Always accompany any behavioral remedy with explicit evidence that contradicts students' beliefs about themselves and the importance of their performance. In other words, prove to the students who believe they can't succeed that they can and prove that the activity students find worthless is worthwhile.

These rules are based on the fact that students are lawful. If they believe they can't succeed, they have a strong basis in evidence—a rich history of events—that document their inability to succeed. Even if the teacher is supportive and patient, failing students know that other students are able to do things they cannot do. The only thing that will effectively contradict their belief that they can't succeed is convincing evidence that they can succeed and are succeeding.

If students are able to perform well on an activity but are not motivated they are perfectly logical and their lack of motivation is based on evidence. They have evidence that their work doesn't make any difference. If they work hard to finish a task, they discover that the teacher was not impressed and acted as if this effort was not adequate. The evidence these students need is that the material is important; the teacher responds to it as if it is important; and when students do it well, the teacher is very impressed with their performance.

In summary, there is evidence for what unmotivated students believe about the activities the teacher presents and about the importance of these activities. If the teacher responds indifferently, students have

no evidence that the activities have value or importance. The teacher must always treat motivation problems as instructional problems. The teacher needs to provide students with evidence that effectively contradicts the current notion they have about the situations in which they are unmotivated (or negatively motivated).

## Diagnosing Problems

Figure 1 shows the steps you take to motivate students to do things they are currently not motivated to do. Note that if the teacher follows these practices, the students will be motivated.

The first question you ask to diagnose the problem is:

(1) Would students be able to perform on the activity if they were motivated?

Note: You answer “yes” only if you have clear evidence that they are able to perform.

Unless the answer is “yes” you assume that the answer is “I don’t know.” (Possibly the answer is “no,” but to be safe, assume it is “I don’t know” and then test it.)

If the answer is “yes,” all that is needed is a better scheme for motivating them. To plan your approach you ask two questions:

(2a) What information would motivate them?

and

(2b) Which practices would have to change for this information to be communicated effectively?

The information that would motivate students generally has to do with what you tell them about their performance and how they should interpret their performance.

The question about practices that would have to change refers to how the

information the teacher presents is conveyed quickly and at appropriate times.

As noted above if you don’t have direct evidence that the answer is “yes,” the answer is “I don’t know.”

If the answer is “I don’t know” you ask:

(3) What tests would provide the answer about whether they could do it?

Note that these are quick tests that take only a few minutes.

(4) What provisions are there for assuring that students try hard on the test you provide?

Note: If students are not motivated when they take the test, the results of the test are not useful. The test has

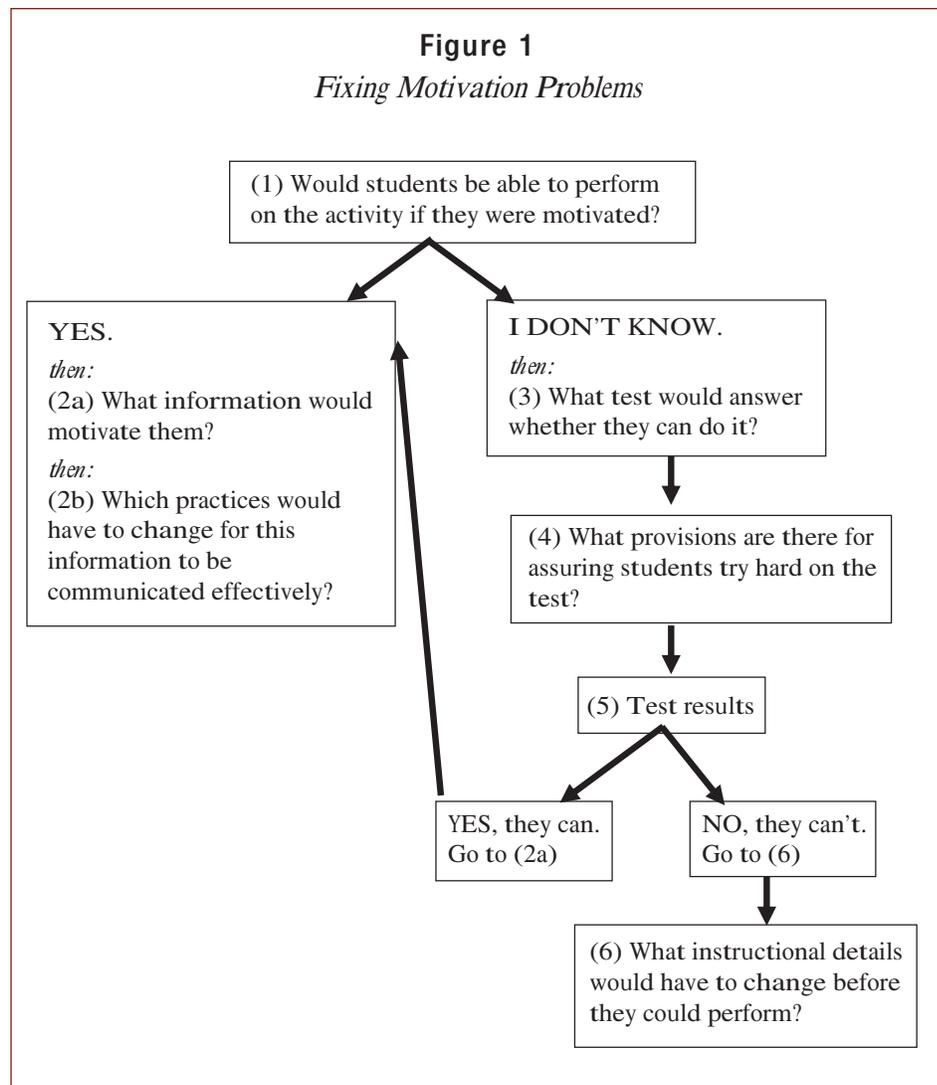
to be designed so it absolutely rules out the possibility that students are not trying.

If the tests show the students can perform, go to question (2a) What information would motivate them?

If the tests show students cannot perform even when motivated, go to question (6) What instructional details would have to change before they could perform on the task?

The test shows students cannot perform when motivated. All questions about the degree of their motivation are moot because regardless of how motivated students are, they can’t perform acceptably. Therefore, they need instruction that targets what they can’t do.

**Figure 1**  
*Fixing Motivation Problems*



## Problems

This section presents problems that illustrate the procedures shown in Figure 1.

### Problem A

*During structured reading, students do not seem to respond as if they are motivated.*

*They get the answers right but they are not enthusiastic. While directing the word attack that preceded the story, the teacher does a fair amount of repeating because the students don't point to the correct word and sometimes don't respond. However, on individual turns, they read the material well.*

Given this observation you can answer question (1):

(1) Would they be able to perform on the activity if they are motivated?

The answer is, "Yes." We have evidence that they make no mistakes even when they appear to be unmotivated.

So you ask question 2a and 2b:

(2a) What information would motivate them?

Basically they need to know that they are succeeding on something that is worthy and challenging. This information serves as foundation evidence about student competence. If a task is challenging, a student who performs well on it must be competent.

(2b) Which practices would have to change for this information to be communicated effectively?

The activity would have to change so it is perceived as being challenging or important. The teacher's reactions to students' successful performance would have to reflect the importance of the performance and possibly relate the performance to a challenging goal.

Answer these two questions:

1. What could the teacher change to make the students' performance more challenging?

2. What could the teacher change so the students' successful performance is evidence of a significant achievement?

Note: You will not convince the students that any system you propose is important unless you provide evidence, not just rhetoric. If there is no basis for the task being challenging, students will not respond to it as if it is challenging, regardless of the teacher's rhetoric.

*Students need to know that they are succeeding on something that is worthy and challenging. This information serves as foundation evidence about student competence. If a task is challenging, a student who performs well on it must be competent.*

### Solution

Teacher:

I think these word lists are too easy for you and take way too much time. So I'm going to make the lists go faster.

Here's the rule: You will read each column of words only one time. How many times? (*One.*) And we'll go a lot faster than we've been going. It doesn't matter how many mistakes you make, you'll read each list just one time.

Here's the catch: If everybody reads all the words in a column correctly when we go through the list, everybody gets one point for good reading. If the reading is sloppy, nobody gets a point for good reading on that column.

I'm going to write a number on the board. That's how many columns I think you can read perfectly the first time you read it. The number for today is 3. Who thinks they can read three lists well? Who thinks they can read more than three lists well?

Let's see just how smart you are.

The teacher then goes fast enough on each column so there is a noticeable difference between the new rate and the historical rate, but not so fast that the students can't read without making mistakes.

The teacher presents at a fixed cadence:

Next column. ... First word. clap.  
Next word. clap. Next. ...

The teacher does not wait for students to point to words. The pace is absolutely fixed.

After students have read each column, the teacher says either, "Good reading, one point," or, "Not good, no points." The goal is for students to exceed the teacher's expectations. The idea is that after the final tally, the teacher is able to say something like:

Well, you got points for 5 columns. That's *way* more than I thought you could do. So I'll have to change the number of lists I think you'll read well next time. But maybe you just got lucky today. We'll see.

This scheme will work well because instead of focusing on peripheral behaviors, like pointing to words and sitting tall, the procedure gives students a reason for looking at the words and performing on signal. If they don't keep up with the teacher's pace, they fail.

Note, however, that the teacher must rig it so that on the first two or three lessons in which this routine occurs,

the students *must* beat the teacher's stated expectations.

Answer these two questions. Then check the answers.

1. In this example, what information motivated the students?

*Ideas: (They were smart and could show the teacher just how smart they were. They could get through the lists much faster, they didn't have to point and repeat lists. Even though this format is "harder" they showed that they didn't need long pauses and didn't need corrections, just "read, baby!")*

2. What practices changed?

*Ideas: (Basically all of those practices changed associated with presenting the material. Now students had to be more responsible for reading, not for behaviors that are peripheral to reading. The technique is designed so the students have a reason for attending. If they don't attend, they don't have the opportunity to show off to the teacher. Also, no student would want to be the one responsible for the group not receiving a point.)*

### Problem B

*Students do not complete their workbook assignments and do not seem motivated when they do their workbook activities.*

To begin you ask yourself question (1). Would they be able to perform well on the task if they were motivated?

The answer is, "I don't know." So you ask yourself questions 3 and 4.

(3) What test would provide an answer?

(4) What provisions are there for assuring students try hard on the test?

Rule 4. When you test for whether students are able to perform, you must rule out the possibility that they fail to respond simply because they are not motivated.

Note: Like all tests referred to here, this one takes only a minute or two.

After the test, you're able to answer the question: Would they be able to perform the task if they were motivated?

The simplest way to motivate them to try hard on the test is to identify one part of the worksheet that they predictably don't do well. Attach an attractive reward for performing well. The teacher would say something like the following:

*When you test for whether students are able to perform, you must rule out the possibility that they fail to respond simply because they are not motivated.*

Find part \_\_\_\_\_ of your worksheet.

Raise your hand if you would like 10 extra minutes of recess today.

You can earn 10 minutes of recess by doing as well as you can on part \_\_\_\_.

You have 2 minutes.

I'll tell you when to start.

Go.

If all students indicated that they would like the extra recess, all should try hard. Whatever mistakes they make are not caused by lack of motivation.

Here are some possible outcomes:

- A. All students did acceptably well.
- B. Most students did well, the others, no better than they had done.
- C. Most students did not do well, no better than they had done before.

D. No students performed acceptably.

For outcomes B, C, and D instruction in the content is implied (because some students still cannot perform acceptably even when motivated). Those who performed poorly are not properly placed in the lesson sequence.

The simplest practice for finding the proper placement lesson range would be to test the students on material that had appeared on worksheets 5 lessons earlier, 10 lessons earlier, and so forth.

For possibility D, all students need to be placed in another part of the program. The testing procedure should clearly identify where students should be placed.

For possibilities B and C, only some of the students failed. The teacher probably won't be able to place the lower performers in another group or at another place in the lesson sequence. The teacher however may be able to structure the workbook material by first going through the items orally with these students before they do their independent work.

For possibility A, all students were able to perform when motivated. Therefore, students need to receive more effective reinforcement practices.

(2a) What information would motivate them?

Idea: their performance makes a difference in something important to them.

(2b) Which practices would have to change for this information to be communicated effectively?

Some practices that work:

- A. Thermometer chart practices, based on students earning 90% correct.
- B. Group rewards, such as the entire group receiving a treat if all members of the group complete so many assignments in a week.

C. Schoolwide announcements about the outstanding progress of the problem group.

Recognize, however, that all successful practices *require the teacher to react as if the task is important*. If the students impress the teacher, that's the biggest reinforcer. Certainly the teacher should give the students a short rationale for why the activity is important. But without daily, very predictable, responses from the teacher about the students' progress and performance, any technique will fail. Thermometer charts that are maintained without reaction from the teacher fail to motivate most students. Group rewards that are not accompanied by information that the reward shows how smart or hard-working the students are will fail. Also recognize that students may not respond in a motivated way to their success unless you train them to respond. That means, you give them the facts they need to know about their improvement and performance, and you make it clear that this endeavor is important.

### Problem C

*The students perform poorly on a teacher-directed oral exercise. A large percentage of the children miss the items from the same exercise that appears on their worksheet.*

(1) Would they be able to perform on the workbook if they were motivated?

The answer is, "I don't know." It is probably "no" because they perform poorly on the exercise during the structured teaching, but by answering the question as "I don't know" we assure that we get the information we need to solve the problem.

(3) What test would answer whether they can do it?

We have a choice of testing on the independent work, or testing them on the teacher-presentation of the structured exercise.

Answer this question: Which would be the more reasonable test?

*The test of the teacher presentation structured activity would be the primary test. The reason is that if we find that the students perform poorly on the independent work when they are motivated, we still face the question of why they perform poorly on the structured exercise. By testing performance on the structured exercise first, we address the most probable cause of the problem.*

*All successful practices require the teacher to react as if the task is important. If the students impress the teacher, that's the biggest reinforcer.*

(4) What provisions are there that the students try hard on the test?

As in problem B, we need some condition that assures students will try hard. The most practical way to determine that is for the trainer to present the exercise, reinforce the students for good performance, and determine exactly what they don't know.

This practice is necessary if the teacher lacks adequate presentation skills. If students perform poorly on an item or two, working directly with the teacher is manageable. For poor performance on an exercise, however, the simplest practice would be for a trainer or other skilled person to present the material and identify the problem.

It's not reasonable to use the same kind of remedy you used to motivate the children in Problem B because we need to get accurate information on everything students do poorly when the teacher presents the exercise. If we try to establish something like 10 minutes of recess as a reinforcer for

trying hard, and permit the teacher to present the exercise, we will most probably frustrate the students because they will probably fail.

Always assume that if students aren't doing it, they can't do it. The purpose of motivational support is to rule out the possibility that they are not trying. In other words, first assume that motivation is not needed, simply more careful instruction. If you discover that motivation is needed, provide it. But do not interpret something as a motivation problem until you have ruled out that it is not a problem of basic teaching practices.

### Problem D

*A reading group makes a lot of mistakes on columns of words during the word attack portion of the lessons in Reading Mastery 2. The teacher's presentation is acceptable but not outstanding. On average the teacher repeats each list four times. The total time spent on word attack is 19 minutes. The teacher follows the practices she has been taught by repeating the columns that have errors, but the group performance seems totally unmotivated. Also, all students can perform perfectly reading words in a column on individual turns.*

(1) Would students be able to perform on the activity if they were motivated?

The answer is, "Yes." The students are able to perform well on individual turns.

(2a) What information would motivate them?

Probably the most motivating information they could have was that there was something they could do to prevent the teacher from presenting the same columns over and over and over and...

(2b) Which practices would have to change for this information to be communicated effectively?

There are different possibilities, but all would have some contingency involving the number of times the teacher could

repeat a column. One possibility is a remedy like that for Problem A. Others could involve different forms of recognition for good performance. For example, the teacher could say:

From now on, I'm only going to repeat a column of words one time. If the group makes only one mistake on the first time we do the column, we will *not* repeat the column.

If you get three or more columns done without being repeated, everybody earns 2 bonus points.

Note: This was a teacher-presentation problem. The students probably gave up because the teacher is apparently far too picky. By setting things up so she won't be so picky but will still maintain a fairly strict standard, the students will be able to view the task of column reading as if it is something they are able to do successfully.

(2b) Which practices would have to change for this information to be communicated effectively?

The primary detail that would have to change is the standard the teacher uses to respond to the students' performance. The teacher needs training in how to use information she has to determine whether children have learned the material.

The simplest way to try to shape the teacher is to ask her before she repeats a column, "Which students will not be able to correctly read all the words in the column?" Typically the teacher would say, "I don't know."

The teacher needs to know so she doesn't present the column repeatedly when all the students are able to do it.

The data on student performance would override what the teacher had been taught about presenting the material; however, this is a ticklish problem because if we give the teacher license to be more lax, the

teacher may perform horribly and overlook serious student errors. Or the teacher may over-generalize and start using the procedure with groups that need the standard correction procedure. So this teacher needs to be monitored closely after she receives the assignment about how to present lists to different groups.

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### Problem E

*Students use soccer balls during recess. They are supposed to put the balls in boxes near the classroom door, but they don't. The teacher responds to their behavior in the same way every day, but the behavior does not improve. "Ralph, how many times do I have to tell you about the soccer balls? PUT THEM IN THE BOXES. That goes for you too Melinda! PUT THEM IN THE BOXES." Although the performance of the class does not change over time, there are different offenders on different days.*

(1) Would students be able to perform on the activity if they were motivated?

The answer is most probably, "Yes."

(2a) What information would motivate them?

This is a classic example of not setting up an activity so the teacher is

able to praise the students for good performance. Instead, the teacher establishes rules and nags those who don't follow the rules. Never does the teacher say one word about students who perform well.

(2b) Which practices the teacher uses would have to change for this information to be communicated effectively?

This is a good example of a motivational problem that is best solved by treating it as an instructional problem. The teacher needs to set up the activity so there are rules. Then the teacher needs to rehearse students on saying and applying the rules. Finally, the teacher needs to routinely reinforce those students who perform well. Here's part of the rehearsal and application:

"Let's see how many trials it takes for everybody to put the balls in the boxes. Let's rehearse. Take the balls out of the boxes and go outside. Line up in front of the door."

Teacher opens door. Students walk in and place balls in boxes as the teacher comments, "Good job. ... Moving quickly but orderly. ... Nice, Henry. ..."

At the end:

"That was super, but here's the big question: will you remember to do it tomorrow? Raise your hand if you think you will. Wow, everybody will remember. That will be hard because I'm not going to say anything to remind you tomorrow. We'll see who does it as well as you just did."

On the next day the teacher opens the door as the students walk in and put the balls in boxes. The teacher praises the group as children put the balls in boxes.

“Everybody is remembering the rule. Good for you.”

After the last student placed her ball in a box, the teacher says, “Wow, everybody did it. That’s pretty amazing. You look so much better than you did before. Will you remember to do it that way tomorrow?”

The answer is “yes” if the teacher responds positively to their performance.

## Problem F

*The teacher presents reading level 3 to the entire class. She has rules about “keeping your place.” She calls on different students, each to read a sentence or two. She calls on students in an unpredictable order. If a student does not start reading within about 5 seconds after she calls on a student, she calls on another student. The students tend not to point to the words that are being read. About 50 percent of them lose turns. The students act as if they are frustrated when they lose their turn.*

(1) Would the students be able to respond when called on if they were motivated?

The answer is, “I don’t know.” So you ask:

(3) What test would provide an answer?

The test should be to motivate the student but not to change the way the teacher presents. If the problem is strictly motivational, the students will perform very well on this test.

(4) What provisions are there for assuring students try hard on the test?

A possibility would be to promise students who respond within the teacher’s time limit 5 extra minutes of free time, or something else they like.

(5) Test results.

Most likely students would tend to perform somewhat better, but a large

percentage would not improve. The reasons are:

A. Each individual student reads aloud infrequently. Therefore the opportunities to give them feedback or provide consequences for their behaviors are infrequent. Behaviors that occur at a very low rate are much harder to change through reinforcement than behaviors that occur at a high rate.

*What provisions are there for assuring students try hard on the test? A possibility would be to promise students who respond within the teacher’s time limit 5 extra minutes of free time, or something else they like.*

B. The teacher’s criterion for “waiting for students to respond” is not explicit. Maybe students will find their place in time. Maybe they won’t. But they have a chance, which makes the low-rate behavior problem even more difficult to change.

C. Possibly most important, the students don’t have a reliable behavior that permits them to track what is being read. This is a serious problem not only because their chances of losing a turn increase greatly but also because students are not benefiting from reading as other students perform.

Because students are unable to perform the task even when motivated, you ask the next question.

(6) What instructional details would have to change before the students could perform on the task?

Largely everything would have to change:

A. The teacher needs to establish and reinforce a procedure for students to track words.

B. The teacher needs to make tracking a high rate behavior that is recognized, reinforced, and if necessary, corrected. The teacher needs an overt behavior to assure that students are tracking. That behavior is pointing to the words that are read. To monitor this behavior the teacher must circulate among the students as they read, and must respond positively to tracking. “Good following along, Harner...”

C. The teacher needs to change the criterion for how much time she allows students to start reading after she calls on a student. A good rule is for the teacher to call on a student, pause one second, and clap. The student starts reading on signal. This routine makes what is expected very clear both for teacher and students.

D. Tracking is a behavior that the students do not have, so it must be taught and rehearsed, just like the soccer ball routine. This training may take a total time of 40 minutes or a little more, presented at the beginning of 5 or 6 consecutive periods.

The simplest practice is for the teacher to state the rule about tracking and provide controlled practice. First, the teacher would read as students followed.

I’m going to go slower and faster, so make sure you touch under each word as I read.

The teacher then reads at rates that are slow enough for all students to track. After the teacher is able to praise virtually all the students for doing a good tracking job, the teacher presents a variation of the game.

You’re going to follow along as I read this time, but I’m going to

make mistakes. As soon as I make a mistake, raise your hand.

The teacher reads at a rate that permits students to follow. The teacher misreads an average of one out of four words at first. After each mistake the teacher quickly says, “Everybody, what’s the correct word?” and claps. The teacher reinforces students for responding on signal. (Note: this is a variation of the response conventions the teacher will use when she calls on students to read—pause one, clap.)

As children become more proficient at raising their hands quickly and responding correctly, the teacher changes the rate of errors so they now average about 1 in 10 words (about one per line).

After students perform well on these tasks, the teacher calls on students to read, following the procedures outlined above. “When I call on you, I’ll clap.” Throughout this training the test the teacher must follow is, “Were you able to reinforce most of the students positively?” If not, what the teacher did is wrong. Possibly the material is too difficult for the students and they should be placed at an earlier lesson in the program.

To train teachers in routines like this, the trainer should model what to do and point out why each step in the practice is necessary.

## Summary

1. Do not treat any problem of motivation as strictly a behavioral problem. It is primarily a teaching problem.
2. Students need evidence about their performance.
3. They need to understand the goals
4. They also need to understand that they are capable of achieving these goals.
5. The reinforcement must be effectively linked to achieving these goals.

The goal is simply what the students must do to receive positive reinforcement. In all cases, students achieve a goal by behaving a particular way. For the soccer ball example, students receive reinforcement for placing the soccer balls in boxes. For the tracking example, students receive reinforcement for being ready to read when the teacher calls on them.

Most problems of motivation result from students either not understanding the goal, not accepting it, not

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receiving adequate training in the behaviors that lead to the goal, or not receiving sufficient evidence that they are able to achieve the goal.

For most problems, students will not be able to reach the goal consistently if they do not receive instruction. The instruction has to be designed so that students will succeed, which means that the teacher is able to praise students on possibly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the trials the teacher presents.

This criterion for effective instruction applies to any situation that involves “motivating” the students. If the students are not responding correctly at a relatively high rate, whatever the teacher is doing is not adequately reinforcing to the students. A situation in which students respond at a low rate of reinforceable responses is evidence that the teacher should change what she is doing and use practices that admit to a high rate of reinforceable performances.

One of the first requirements for effective instruction is that the teacher must recognize that the students will not respond to the goal as if it is important if the teacher does not treat the goal as something important.

Unless students see the goal as something personal, something they want to do, and unless they receive evidence that they are capable of achieving the goal, the motivational program will fail (at least with most of the students).

Teachers can learn the paradigm for fixing motivational problems. It is worth working with them on it because they then have the tools they can apply to any situation in which they find themselves nagging the students or any situation in which students’ rate of success is low.

In principle the formula is simply to look at the problem as an instructional problem. Ask the umbrella questions, “What can I do to change the situation so I am not nagging or correcting repeatedly on the same behaviors? What changes would be needed so I am able to praise the students for doing it the right way?”

The paradigm for “Fixing Motivation Problems” is based on the following facts.

1. Students need evidence that they can succeed and they are succeeding.
2. They need instruction on the importance of this activity.
3. They need some set routine or procedures that they do regularly.
4. They need frequent reinforcement for performing well.

The frequent reinforcements from the teacher are the primary evidence of success. If students understand that the goal is important, their improving performance provides them with the evidence that they are succeeding at doing something important. *ADI*