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A PROPOSAL TO CREATE A COLLEGE-LEVEL READING CLASS
FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Special Education

by
Gary Richard Bergstrom
December 2002

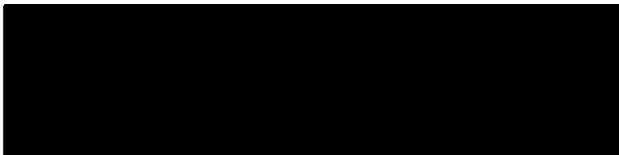
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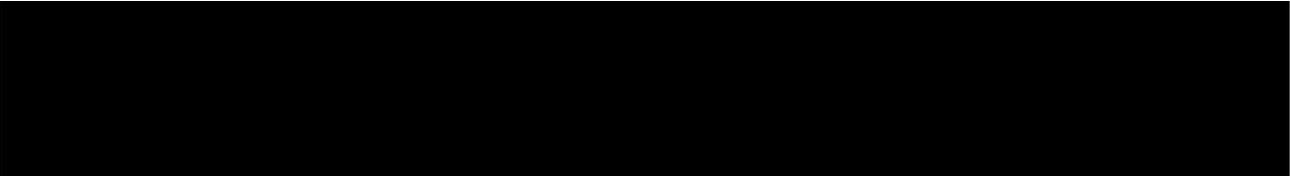
December 2002

Approved by:



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11/25/02
Date



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ABSTRACT

Increasing numbers of students with learning disabilities (LD) are attending college and are struggling to achieve fluency, and comprehension in their basic reading skills. Many of these students display limited awareness of basic rules of phonics and/or lack phonemic awareness. In response, a college level reading class for the student with LD has been developed.

This project includes a review of the literature related to the types of struggles a student with learning disabilities faces in attaining reading competence, the etiology behind the struggle as well as research-based intervention approaches. Following the review of the literature, an attempt is made to establish the need for a college-level reading class for the student with LD.

Chapter two contains an overview of the course and describes the method, namely that the information will be presented in a direct, systematic, intense manner and will be individualized as much as possible, and will use multisensory techniques. Chapter three delineates the individual units of the course, indicating a focus on individual skills for the first fourteen weeks of the

course. The remaining four weeks will focus on integration of skills through reading short articles and stories, many of which focus on attributes of resiliency and success. The project finishes with a summary of what was learned and recommendations for educators. It is hoped that upon completion of this project, the researcher will gain approval from his college to actually offer the course.

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CHAPTER ONE
A READING CLASS FOR THE
STUDENT WITH LEARNING
DISABILITIES

Introduction and Purpose of Project

This researcher has been teaching reading at College of the Desert for nine years. During that time, he has observed an increasing number of students who struggle desperately to attain reading fluency, comprehension, and basic writing skills. Observing these students, it became clear that they needed a more specialized form of reading instruction that focuses on students with mild to moderate learning disabilities (LD). With that in mind, this researcher decided to focus his recent sabbatical on obtaining a master's degree in Special Education and, for his master's project, to create a college-level reading class designed specifically for students who have mild to moderate LD. What follows is a review of the literature. It will document the specific types of reading struggles that a person with mild to moderate LD faces combined with how best to address those struggles. Next, it explains the possible reasons behind reading and language

disabilities. Finally, it attempts to connect these findings with the need for a college-level reading class for the student with learning disabilities. Following the review of the literature is the actual course proposal. This contains a description of the course followed by the individual units the course will cover. The unit descriptions include scope and sequence of concepts covered. Finally, the appendices offer actual samples of curriculum.

Scope and Significance of the Project

This project can be used by secondary and post-secondary educators who are looking for a method and justifications to improve the reading abilities of a student with mild LD. It covers current research by leaders in the field of reading and learning disabilities including the National Institutes of Health.

Limitations of the Project

The major difficulties in putting this project together were that most research on LD has been done on children. Also, most intervention curriculum is designed for the primary-aged student with LD. Furthermore, most adult reading instruction curriculum is designed for the

adult who is functionally illiterate. Very little curriculum exists for the college-age student who can read, but has major difficulties in pronunciation, fluency and comprehension. Therefore, much of this project has been adapted from these different but related areas in an attempt to create an interesting, non-demeaning class for the college student with LD who wants to break the cycle of failure. The focus is limited to the student with mild to moderate LD.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Struggles and Remedies in Reading

After two years of extensive research, the National Reading Panel (NRP) released its scientific report on research-based reading instruction on April 13, 2000. *Teaching Children to Read*, funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), identified more than 100,000 reading research studies completed since 1966 and another 15,000 published before that time. They subjected the reports to scientific analysis for reliability, validity, replicability, and applicability. Additionally, the panel only selected research that appeared in refereed (peer-reviewed) journals.

The panel found that for children to be successful readers, they must be taught:

1. Phonemic awareness - the ability to manipulate the sounds that make up spoken language.
2. Phonics skills - the understanding that there are relationships between letters and sounds.

3. Fluency skills - the ability to read fluently with accuracy, speed, and expression.
4. Comprehension strategies - to enhance understanding and enjoyment of what they read (NICHD, 2000).

Based on their findings, it is clear that many readers with disabilities struggle with not only a lack of ability to hear and manipulate isolated segments of sound (phonemic awareness) but also lack understanding of the relationships between sounds and letters (phonics). According to Scanlon and Vellutino (2001) "There is a converging body of research evidence suggesting that the most common cause of early reading problems is difficulty with processing the phonological component of language" (p.1). They also stated, "Children who experience difficulty in learning to read typically differ from normally developing readers in their sensitivity to the phonemic (sound) structure of spoken language (phonemic awareness)" (p.2). In addition, Adams (2001) indicated, "A failure to notice that spoken words can be broken into phonemes is a major cause of profound reading disability" (p.2). Shaywitz (1996) stated that even in high school students, phonological awareness - the ability to segment

words into their underlying phonological units - is the number one predictor of reading ability independent of intelligence, vocabulary, reasoning skills or socioeconomic status.

This research seems to indicate a need for systematic, explicit, intense instruction in phonemic awareness and systematic synthetic phonics instruction. Indeed, according to a NIH News Alert (2000), the aforementioned NRP report stated that the research "strongly supports the concept that explicitly and systematically teaching children to manipulate phonemes significantly improves children's reading and spelling abilities. The evidence for this is so clear cut that this method should be an important component of classroom reading instruction" (p.2). The NIH News Alert also reported that systematic synthetic phonics instruction, which teaches students to "convert letters into phonemes and then blend the phonemes to form words," and systematic phonics, which involves "teaching a planned sequence of phonics elements, rather than highlighting elements as they happen to appear in a text," significantly improved the reading ability of K-6th grade children from all socioeconomic levels (p.2). Unfortunately, a survey by

Luisa Moats (1994) indicated many general education teachers understood little about language elements and structure and how these elements are represented in writing resulting in an inability to teach these skills sufficiently.

In addition to their lack of phonemic awareness and lack of phonics skills, readers with learning disabilities (LD) also struggle with fluency issues. Specifically, they lack accuracy, speed and expression when they read aloud. There are currently two contrasting theories on how to improve fluency: sustained silent reading (SSR) and guided oral reading. In SSR, a student reads silently for between twenty and forty minutes a day. The theory is that the more you read, the more fluency you attain (Allington, 1997). In guided oral reading, the student reads aloud to the teacher or parent who provides feedback and guidance on how well the student is reading and what to work on for improvement (Samuels, 1979).

Although there is a great deal of anecdotal research supporting SSR, the NICHD's National Reading Panel (2000) found no scientific evidence to support its use. The Panel indicated that the existing research showing SSR's efficacy is correlational in nature and that correlation

does not necessarily imply causation. In other words, current research has not answered whether SSR makes better readers or whether better readers simply engage in SSR more frequently. The direction of the relationship is unclear. Particularly important however, is that the panel indicated that SSR was not effective if used as the only method to increase fluency particularly with students who had not developed critical phonemic awareness and word attack skills (NRP, 2000).

On the other hand, there has been abundant research supporting the efficacy of guided oral reading (Dowhower, 1987; Dowhower, 1994; Herman, 1985; Homan, Klesius, & Hite, 1993; O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea, 1985; Sindelar, Monda, & O'Shea, 1990). According to this research, guided oral reading consistently improved word recognition, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension at all grade levels all the way up to high school with greater gains made by poor readers.

Why is fluency important? Because readers with disabilities also struggle with comprehension, and in the area of comprehension, research has consistently found that improved fluency resulted in improved comprehension (Calfee & Piontkowski, 1981; Herman, 1985). According to

the phonological deficit hypothesis, the reader with a disability uses most of his cognitive resources and short-term memory in struggling to decode leaving little resources left for comprehension (Shaywitz, 1996). Conversely, the fluent reader, having obtained automaticity in decoding, has sufficient cognitive resources and short-term memory available to focus on making meaning.

Even if an individual has achieved fluency in decoding, there are still other areas that can influence comprehension. They are vocabulary instruction, text comprehension strategy instruction, background knowledge (schemata), teacher preparation instruction, and choice of methodology. Of these, it is generally acknowledged that background knowledge has been the most important variable in reading comprehension. Johnston and Pearson (1996) concluded that, "prior knowledge can account for more variation in reading performance than either IQ or measured reading achievement" (p.66). Moreover, Deshler, Ellis, and Lenz (1996) stressed that "Students who know many strategies but have little background knowledge of the world may have difficulty relating new information to their limited knowledge base" (p.411). This research

points to the important question of how to support the building of background knowledge. Unfortunately, the research is largely silent on proven techniques for doing this. According to Deshler et al. (1996), there is some research support that SSR can build schemata, however, the NRP report (2000) cited previously cautioned that most of these studies were correlational in nature and correlation does not imply causation. Also, according to Deshler et al. (1996), it seems that class discussion and advance organizers are helpful for building schemata, but no research has shown a direct improvement in comprehension using these methods.

Another research-validated method for improving comprehension is vocabulary instruction. The NRP report (2000) stated any and all forms of vocabulary instruction are beneficial with one cautionary note that relying on just one method will not provide optimal results. The various forms of vocabulary instruction investigated included direct instruction, repetitive-use instruction, in-context instruction, computer-assisted instruction, and incidental learning that accompanies other learning activities.

The next area known to influence comprehension is direct teaching of text comprehension strategies.

According to the NRP report (2000), text comprehension strategies that were successful include:

1. Metacognitive strategies where the reader learns to monitor his comprehension.
2. Cooperative learning where students work together to learn strategies.
3. Graphic and semantic organizational strategies like mapping.
4. Story structure strategies where the reader asks the who, what, when, why, where questions about the plot of a story and also maps out timelines, characters and events.
5. Question generation strategies where the student asks himself the reporter's questions and other higher level questions in accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy.
6. Summarizing strategies in which the student identifies topic, main idea, and supporting details.
7. Multiple-strategy instruction like SQ3R or a combination of any of the above strategies.

The last area that influenced comprehension was training the teacher in presenting strategies to help

comprehension. Research has shown that training teachers to present comprehension strategies more effectively has an ultimate beneficial effect on student comprehension (NRP, 2000).

Research has also investigated the choice of instructional methods for students with LD. Findings indicated that direct, systematic teaching methods are more beneficial to students with LD. Sturomski (1997) cited multiple researchers who concluded that a systematic approach to providing instruction greatly improves student achievement. Also, according to Sturomski researchers "have identified common teaching practices of successful teachers, such as teaching in small steps, practicing after each step, guiding students during initial practice, and providing all students with opportunities for success" (1997, p.7). Sturomski went on to say that, other researchers have found "teacher-directed, rather than student-directed activities provide for an effective educational experience that is more likely to improve student achievement" (p.7).

In addition, according to Henry (2000), there is a growing body of evidence showing that the use of multisensory (auditory, visual and kinesthetic-tactile)

teaching combined with explicit structured language teaching leads to significant gains in language skills.

Finally, according to Carroll's model, the careful preparation and sequencing of materials to match students' skills as well as pacing the instruction to match different aptitudes will produce higher outcomes than when materials are not matched to individual skill levels (Carroll, 1989).

Reasons Behind Reading and Language Disabilities

Why are phonemic awareness and phonics skills so important, and why, as Adams (2001) implied, is adequate instruction in these areas so critical? Sally Shaywitz (1996) argued that reading is not a natural process like speaking and must be consciously learned. She stated that English has just 44 phonemes (sounds) that make up the entire language. A person must intuitively and implicitly recognize that the word "cat", for example, is composed of three separate and segmentable sounds |k|, |ae|, and |tuh|. Furthermore, the learner must achieve automaticity in translating those sounds to written symbols. However, Dr. Reid Lyon, a research psychologist and Chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch at the NICHD within

the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in an interview with KidSource Online (1999) stated that approximately 20 to 30% of our population has difficulties learning to read. Lyon went on to say that "whether the causes are environmental or genetic in nature, the reading problems occur due to deficits in phoneme awareness, phonics development, reading fluency, reading comprehension or, frequently, combinations of these" (p.2). Shaywitz (1996) described the potential cause as the phonological deficit hypothesis, which states, "a circumscribed deficit in phonological processing impairs decoding, preventing word identification" (p.5). Thus, although higher order processes involving comprehension may be intact, they cannot be called into play because the individual cannot get past the phonological decoding stage. Also, according to Shaywitz other research has demonstrated that whereas a normal individual can process phonemes in less than 40 milliseconds, individuals with LD can take up to 500 milliseconds to process the same phonemes.

Considerable recent research has focused on the search for an underlying neurological cause for reading disabilities. A promising technology to assist in this ongoing investigative effort is called functional magnetic

resonance imaging (fMRI). This is a technology which involves no radiation or injections but simply uses magnetism to detect concentrated areas of hemoglobin in the brain (hemoglobin contains iron) during various cognitive processing tasks.

Using this technology has shown that there is a definite neurological fingerprint for readers with disabilities. Good readers activate a large neural circuit in the back of the brain. Poor readers underactivate this same circuit and, in contrast, overactivate a circuit in the front of the brain (Shaywitz, 1996; Shaywitz, 1998). This is important, because LD is an invisible disorder and often the individual with LD gets blamed for not trying hard enough or being lazy. Now, with this technology, scientists, educators, and parents have evidence that the struggling reader may have a neurological problem - a problem that has a 30 to 40% chance of being genetic in nature (Berninger et al., 2001). Researchers at the University of Washington (1999) have estimated that this overactivation/underactivation problem results in an individual with dyslexia using nearly five times more brain area to read than a normal individual. The same

researchers compared the amount of brain area used to differentiate between rhyming and non-rhyming words to the amount of brain area used to differentiate between musical test tones. Using proton echo-planar spectroscopic imaging (PEPSI) technology, the researchers found that the individuals with dyslexia used almost five times more brain area to differentiate between sets of words than they did to differentiate between the musical tones. According to the researchers, this meant that dyslexia affected auditory language and not nonlinguistic auditory function.

Additional finds from fMRI are that men and women activate different circuits in phonological processing. Men, in phonological processing, engage the left inferior frontal gyrus, while women activate not only the left, but the right inferior frontal gyrus as well. The data suggested that women have bilateralism in phonological processing ability. This could explain why women are less affected in their speech after a stroke and also why women tend to be more successful in compensating for reading disabilities than men (Shaywitz, 1996). It could also explain why boys and men are over-identified when it comes to LD. Although men and women suffer equally from LD,

women tend to compensate for it more often than men (Shaywitz, 1996).

It is important to realize that although approximately 30% to 40% of reading disabilities is genetic in nature, approximately 60% to 70% is environmental in nature (Berninger et al., 2001). Some of the environmental causes of reading disabilities include limited exposure to oral language interactions, low socioeconomic conditions, limited English proficiency (LEP), and limited exposure to written and spoken language. However, Adams (2001) stated, "The major contributor to reading failure is instruction that is inadequate to the child's needs or the demands of the reading situation" (p.2).

The Need for a College Reading Class for the Student with Learning Disabilities

According to Foorman, Fletcher, and Francis, (2001) 74% of poor readers in the 3rd grade remain so in the 9th grade. In addition, Wilson and Lesaux, (2001) compared phonological awareness in university-age students with dyslexia to a control group and found that "Despite age-appropriate performances on standardized reading and spelling measures, phonological processing deficits

persisted in the dyslexia group" (p.1). They concluded that "These findings support the causal role of phonological awareness in the acquisition of reading skills and indicate that differences in phonological processing skills are still evident in a sample of university students with dyslexia compared to a group matched on age and education" (p.2). The researchers also cited research done by Pennington, Van Orden, Smith, Green, and Haith (1990), who found that deficits in phoneme awareness persist into adulthood. These findings seem to indicate the need for a college-level reading class for students with LD.

Another reason for offering a college reading class to students with LD is that those students frequently have not received proper help in the K-12 system. According to Jack Fletcher, a language expert at the University of Texas, "What we already know from research is not being applied in instruction" (Hotz, 1998, p.A38). Ellis (1996) said that "a major impediment to implementing a phonemic approach is the poor level of phonemic awareness among teachers who teach reading and among teachers in general" (p. 18). He referred to a survey by Moats (1994) who found that teachers who were aware of their lack of

phonemic knowledge and sought help received little training. A follow-up to the Moats' study by Mather, Bos, and Babur (2001) found that "general education teachers, at both preservice and inservice levels, are not prepared adequately for [the] challenging task" of providing students at risk and students with LD "systematic instruction in phonological awareness and letter-sound correspondences" (p. 1). Specifically, the study indicated that "results suggested that both groups had insufficient knowledge about concepts of English language structure..." (pp.4-5). Ellis (1996) also referred to Anderson et al. (1985) who alerted the country in their report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers* to the need for "explicit phonic teaching" (p. 18). Ellis went on to say "The nation has poured millions of tax dollars into research that supports phonological approaches, yet little has changed in the school systems" (p. 18). In a 1997 article from Council for Exceptional Children, Reid Lyon stated that research data could indicate that "most students who have reading problems haven't been taught well" (p. 1). Finally, Louise Spear-Swerling (2001) stated that "Unfortunately ... an emphasis on teaching

decoding skills is not currently in vogue in many schools" (p.4).

This proposal is an attempt to break this cycle by exposing students with LD to an intense, explicit, direct, multisensory reading course at College of the Desert. As such, the course will be designed for adults building on the research done on students in lower grades. The course systematically and sequentially will address phonemic awareness, systematic, synthetic phonics practice, and then fluency and comprehension training. The proposed class will meet daily for an entire semester in order to be of sufficient intensity and duration. Finally, once students achieve a moderate level of phonemic awareness and phonics abilities, they will be required to do regular oral readings to build fluency. The rest of this project will detail the actual course including the course syllabus and materials.

CHAPTER THREE

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

As a result of the author's observations and the review of the literature, a course was developed for students with learning disabilities (LD) who have always struggled with reading and want to break the cycle of failure. The course will focus primarily on teaching students with LD the basics of language and reading in order to bring their reading ability up to a seventh grade level. The course may also be valuable for ESL students who want intense instruction in the basics of English and reading.

Each student entering the course will be individually assessed as to his or her reading level using Ekwall's Informal Reading Inventory (IRI), (Appendix A). The course will meet four days a week for one hour per day. Instruction will be direct, explicit, intense, supportive, and systematic and will use multisensory as well as collaborative teaching and learning techniques. The course will be taught in units. Most units will be preceded by diagnostic tests in order to individualize

instruction as much as possible. Information in each unit will be presented in such a way as to make learning nearly error-free; i.e., 10% of the material will be new and 90% of the material will be already familiar. Instruction of each unit will proceed in steps beginning with direct instruction followed by demonstration or modeling. Next the students will be coached in guided application and will finish with independent practice. The goals and objectives of each unit will be stated explicitly with the understanding that help is always available and that all achievement will be recognized. Ultimately however, students will be required to meet each unit's goals and objectives by passing a criterion-referenced competency test with a minimum score of 80%. Criteria will be drawn from each unit's goals and objectives and types of tests will vary according to the unit. To help students achieve the minimum 80% score, multiple attempts to pass each unit's competency test will be allowed and tests will be offered orally or in writing.

Finally, each class will start with a read-aloud activity where the instructor will read aloud to the students from high interest novels and newspaper or magazine articles.

Rationale

The rationale behind the scope and sequence of the course is multi-faceted. First, this is a course offered to the college student with LD. This type of student experiences a high rate of academic failure and frequently drops out after one semester. Therefore, the first unit focuses on resiliency in an effort to build characteristics of perseverance.

After the first unit, the rationale for the order of the remaining units is to establish an instructional level at which an individual student can perform with 90% success, then to continue instruction while maintaining this level of success.

In addition, the review of the literature clearly states that even at college age, students with LD still struggle with reading fluency skills. Reading fluency depends on an individual attaining the skills covered in units two through seven. The order of the units is logical in that the latter skills depend on mastery of the earlier skills. For example, phonics does not work well if an individual lacks phonemic awareness; semantics are not understandable without knowledge of morphology and

syntax. And reading fluency depends upon competency in all these areas.

Last, instruction methodology is based upon research mentioned in the review of the literature pointing to the efficacy of direct, individualized, multisensory, and systematic instruction.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNITS

Unit 1 - Resiliency and Success - One Week

This unit will focus upon identifying, listing and categorizing characteristics of resiliency or what makes a person resilient. Discussion will elicit how to build those characteristics in an individual. After the initial unit, the remainder of the class will focus on the actual building up of student resiliency using bibliotherapy - the reading and discussing of materials that help individuals to understand and correct areas of personal difficulty in their lives (Appendix B).

Unit 2 - Phonology and Phonological Awareness- Two Weeks

Phonology is the study of sounds. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound that can be recognized and distinguished from other sounds. Phonological awareness involves being aware of and able to segment words into their individual component sounds. Students will be assessed using the Auditory Analysis Test and the Test of Phonological Awareness in order to determine a starting

point for phonological training. Instruction will focus on the following:

- Rhyme, alliteration, segmentation, deletion and blending.
- Training and building of listening skills through listening to and repeating of musical and/or rhythmic exercises as well as poetry.
- Training in discrimination between tones of different pitch, duration, intensity, and volume.
- Clapping the rhythm of words.
- Production of different rhythms involving different parts of the body like hands, feet, toes, knees, and head.
- Counting the number of phonemes in a word.

Unit 3 - Sound-Symbol Association - One Week

This unit will involve reviewing, as necessary, the various sounds of the English language and their corresponding letters and combinations of letters. Instruction will proceed in two directions, visual to auditory and auditory to visual. Moreover, each direction will be presented in two ways, synthetic, which will

present the parts of the language and then teach how the parts work together to form a whole, and analytic, which presents the whole and teaches how this can be broken down into its component parts. Instruction will be based upon results of individually administered "Quick Survey Word List," and "El Paso Phonics Survey" by Ekwall (Appendix A). Activities will include:

- Practicing of phonogram word lists (Appendix B) also by Ekwall.
- Dictation
- Choral Reading
- Group phonological analysis

Unit 4 - Syllable Instruction - One Week

A syllable is a unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. Instruction will focus on the six basic types of syllables in the English language: closed, vowel-consonant-e, open, consonant - le, r - controlled, and diphthong. Syllable division rules will be directly taught in relation to the word structure. Students will be assessed using the "Syllable Principles Test" by Ekwall (Appendix A). Activities will include:

- Clapping the syllables.

- Segmentation deletion and manipulation of syllables.
- Students listening to a word minus one syllable, identifying that syllable and saying the complete word.
- Dictation of words combined with group analyzing of syllables.

Unit 5 - Morphology - Two Weeks

A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in the language. Morphology is the study of how morphemes are combined into words. Instruction will include a study of base words, roots and affixes. Instruction will draw from a commercially generated list of prefixes, suffixes and roots (Appendix B) and will center on reading, writing, and discussing different types of affixes and roots.

Activities will include:

- Dictation.
- Group analytical exercises.
- Cloze exercises focusing on certain morphological components.

Unit 6 - Syntax - One Week

Syntax is the set of principles that dictate the sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. Instruction will include grammar, sentence variation and the mechanics of language. Activities will be based upon an error analysis of a writing sample from all students. Activities will include:

- Dictation of sentences.
- Group activities involving finding and correcting errors in sentences.
- Group activities involving arranging sentences into the correct order.
- Group cloze exercises involving grammatical problems.

Unit 7 - Semantics - Three Weeks

Semantics is that aspect of language concerned with meaning. Instruction will focus on comprehension including building of schemata, strategies for comprehension and/or reading-study strategies like SQ3R and SOAR (Appendix B) and instruction in metacognition. Metacognitive instruction will focus on two areas:

awareness and self-control and will use activities like Directed Reading Thinking Activities (DRTA's), KWL, Four Questions, and "SPOT the story" (See Appendix B).

Intensive support will be provided in this area through the use of advance organizers, guides, videos, paraphrasing, discussion, teacher explanation, pictures and realia. In addition students will learn how to summarize, map, outline, predict, and generate questions in order to facilitate comprehension. Finally, there will be an emphasis on strengthening vocabulary through group exercises in which students put words into categories, generate sentences with words, and do fill-in the blanks exercises with selected words. Assessment will be accomplished through group administration of CLOZE passages.

Unit 8 - Fluency - Two Weeks

Fluency is the smoothness or ease with which a student reads. Fluency has a direct impact upon comprehension. Instruction will focus upon repeated readings, and pronouncing of words in isolation. All readings and words to be pronounced will be put on tape. Students will also listen to tapes of other students

reading (not in the same class) and will analyze the fluency and errors those students make. Assessment will be done through miscue analysis of all oral readings. Errors for each reading will be graphed throughout the class so students can measure their progress.

The remaining four weeks of the semester will focus on blending all of the units into the reading of short articles with attention given to pulling out vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, syntax and semantics. Many of the articles will focus on resiliency and success attributes.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this project was to address the needs of increasing numbers of students with learning disabilities (LD) attending college. These students struggle with various issues including poor fluency in reading, poor comprehension of what they have read, a lack of knowledge of reading and study strategies, and a severely limited knowledge of grammar and writing skills. Because of these deficiencies, most of these students are doomed to failure.

Investigation revealed that one of the primary, research-identified causes was inadequate instruction at the primary and secondary levels. With that in mind, the project took shape as the creation of a reading class for the college student with LD.

It was decided that the class would be divided into units with each unit addressing research-established weaknesses that the typical college student with LD faces. After the initial focus on improving these weaknesses through direct, systematic instruction, the remainder of

the class would be devoted to integrating the skills by reading various narrative and expository compositions some of which would have a strong focus on resiliency.

Conclusions

It is hoped that by going back to a focus on basics and a rebuilding of reading, writing, and study skills that the college student with LD will be able to break the cycle of frustration and failure. This project was designed to do exactly that. Upon completion of this class, the college student with LD will have had an intense review and reconstruction of those skills so necessary to succeed in college and in life.

Recommendations

This researcher hopes that those reading this project will further study the cutting edge research being done by the National Institutes of Health and other institutions into the causes of LD. This researcher especially recommends going to the website of the International Dyslexia Association. This organization has taken a strong role in researching learning disabilities and is at the forefront of methods and strategies to help the student with LD.

This researcher also hopes that educational institutions will finally realize after reading this project that a whole-language approach to teaching reading is an inducement for failure in those students genetically predisposed to LD. He strongly recommends a return to a phonics-based approach to teaching reading, as the California Language Arts Framework requires.

APPENDIX A

TESTS

EKWALL'S IRI - 4th GRADE LEVEL

Some people enjoy exploring the many caves in this country. This can be a lot of fun but it can also be dangerous because you might get lost. Many people have been lost in caves because they did not know what to do to find their way out.

One thing that people who explore caves often take with them is a ball of string. The string serves an important purpose in keeping them from getting lost. They tie one end of the string to a stake outside the cave and unroll the string as they walk along. This way, when they want to leave the cave, all they have to do to find their way out is to follow the string.

Some caves may appear small at the opening, but when you get inside there may be many giant rooms or caverns in them. One of the largest known caves in the world is Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. It contains enormous caverns and underground rivers, and may take up as much space as 78 square miles.

(176 words) (Number of word recognition errors _____)

Questions:

-
- F 1. ____ What do some people enjoy doing? (Exploring caves)
 F 2. ____ Why can exploring caves be dangerous? (Because you might get
 Lost)
 F 3. ____ Why have many people been lost in caves? (Because they did
 Not know how to find their way out)
 F 4. ____ What do people who explore caves often take with them? (A
 Ball of string)
 F 5. ____ What is the string tied to outside the cave? (To a stake)
 F 6. ____ How do they use the string to find their way out? (They
 Follow it, or follow the string that has been unrolled)
 V 7. ____ What is a cavern? (A large room or cave)
 F 8. ____ Wher is one of the largest known caves? (In Kentucky)
 F 9. ____ What else does Mammoth Cave contain besides enormous
 caverns?
 (Underground rivers, or rivers)
 I 10. ____ Why would someone who explored caves need to be brave?
 (Because it is dangerous, or because one might get lost)

Number of Questions Level Missed	Number of Word Recognition Errors						Reading
	0-2	3-6	7-9	10-13	14-16	17	
0	+	*	*	*	*	x	
1 Independent	+	*	*	*	x	x	+ =
2 Instructional	*	*	*	x	x	x	* =
3 Frustration	*	*	x	x	x	x	x =
4	*	x	x	x	x	x	
5+	x	x	x	x	x	x	

QUICK SURVEY WORD LIST

Wratbeling

Dawsnite

Pramminciling

Whetsplitter

Gincule

Cringale

Slatrungle

Twayfrall

Spreanplit

Goanbate

Streegran

Glammertickly

Grantellean

, Aipcid

EL PASO PHONICS SURVEY

(Student makes sound of first letter, pronounces the middle word, then pronounces the final word.)

1. P AM PAM
2. N UP NUP
3. S UP SUP
4. T UP TUP
5. R IN RIN
6. M IN MIN
7. B UP BUP
8. D UP DUP
9. W AM WAM
10. H UP HUP
11. F IN FIN
12. J IN JIN
13. K AM KAM
14. L IN LIN
15. C AM CAM

This continues through a whole series of pronunciations.

EKWALL'S STIMULAS SHEETS FOR VOWEL RULES AND
SYLLABICATION PRINCIPLES

Say to the student, "Here are some nonsense words. In other words they are not real words. Tell me where you would divide them in syllables if they were real words."

Alpil

Oppor

Botnap

Curron

Naple

Frable

Daple

Saple

APPENDIX B
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

YEARNING FOR DADDY

As a youngster, I wanted to be my father's special girl. I was always looking for signs of love and approval in his eyes. In my fantasy he adored me, spoke to me gently, lovingly, was my protector, the salve for all of my hurts and wounds. But there was a world of difference between the relationship I craved and the one I actually had with my father.

Lawrence was a good man. He was smart, stern, confident. He didn't smoke, drink or curse. He was refined, respectful - the kind of man who tipped his hat in the presence of women. He supported his family, and he came home every night after he closed his ladies' apparel store. I don't remember my mother or us children ever wondering where he was. We always knew. His world was small - he was either doing business or he was at home. And while his family had the benefits of his physical presence every day, emotionally he was miles away. Lawrence was a quiet man whom I never once saw hug anyone.

During my younger years I longed for a closer relationship with my father, and as I grew older, I tried to fashion it. Even after I'd moved away from home, when I visited my family, I'd curl up on Daddy's lap, despite his protests. I'd kiss his bristly face, then force his lips to my cheek and insist on my kiss ("One I can hear Daddy") before I'd let him alone.

My father is dead now. I'm glad I reached out to him while he was here, did the hugging and kissing and didn't wait on *him*. But even though I managed to build a bridge to my father near the end of his life, a real distance separated us. I never succeeded in making that deeper emotional connection I yearned for.

How often we crave what we think somebody else has. When I was growing up, a girlfriend's father appeared to have everything I wanted in a dad. He was young, hip, seemed loving and close to his children. But years later I learned that he had sexually abused them. So whatever our parents did or didn't give us, we'd better resolve that they gave us enough, did the best they could with what they had. They got us this far, and how we move our lives forward is up to us.

I've made a conscious decision to focus on the gifts my father gave me. I don't want to keep reenacting old scenes and reliving the pain the distance between us caused. I don't want the model for what I seek in a man to be molded by my childhood hurts or by what I feel my father *didn't* give me.

With time and introspection, we can heal our wounds. Even our most painful experiences can help us grow in wisdom - if only we can see those experiences as stepping stones. As I've matured, I've come to understand my father and to cherish the gifts he gave me. As an adult I feel grateful for many of those stern ways that caused me pain as a youngster. He gave me the tools for survival.

These days I'm passionately examining my parent's lives. The more I learn about my father's childhood and the experiences that shaped him, the less I take his behavior personally. People can only be who they are. And we bring who we are - the good and the unhealthy parts of ourselves - to our relationships. I've learned to forgive my father. And there is much for us to forgive our parents for. I know. I'm a parent. I hope my daughter will be as generous with me.

This article focuses on issues of forgiveness and personal healing, which are two areas integral to resiliency.

LIST OF PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES

FROM EKWALL

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
A	on, in at	alive, asleep, abed
A (an)	not, without	anhydrous, anarchy
Ab, abs	from	abduct, abstain
Ad	to, at, toward	adapt
Ambi	both	ambivalent, ambidextrous
Amphi	both, around	amphibian, amphitheatre

The list continues covering most prefixes and suffixes.

EKWALL'S PHONOGRAM WORD LIST

Third Grade

1. ab - blab, cab, crab, dab, drab, flab, grab
2. ace - brace, face, grace, lace, mace, pace
3. ack - back, black, clack, crack, hack, jack
4. ad - bad, brad, cad, clad, dad, fad, gad, glad
5. ade - blade, fade, grade, jade, lade, made
6. afe - chafe, safe, strafe
7. ag - bag, grag, crag, drag, flag, gag, hag, lag
8. age - cage, gage, page, rage, sage, stage, wage
9. aid - braid, laid, maid, paid, raid
10. ail - bail, fail, flail, frail, hail, jail, mail
11. ain - brain, chain, drain, gain, grain, lain
12. aint - faint, paint, plaint, quaint, saint, taint
13. air - chair, fair, flair, hair, lair, pair, stair
14. ake - bake, brake, cake, drake, fake, flake, lake
15. ale - bale, Dale, gale, hale, Kale, male, pale
16. alk - balk, calk, chalk, stalk, talk, walk

This is an example of some of the words for each phonogram. The phonograms continue for several pages.

FOUR QUESTIONS

These are questions that help students self-monitor their comprehension.

1. Can I put this in my own words?
2. Can I retell this story/article/paragraph?
3. What don't I understand?
4. Can I guess what will happen next?

SPOT THE STORY

This is a story retelling strategy. Students use the acronym, "SPOT" to help them generate the retelling.

S = Setting = who, what, when, where?

P = Problem = What's the problem to be solved?

O = Order of Action = What happened to solve the problem?

T = Tail End = What happened in the end?

KWL

Again, these are questions to help students self-monitor their comprehension.

K = What I know. Students think about what they already know about the topic.

W = What I want to know. Students ask questions about the topic.

L = What I learned. Students compare what they learned with what they asked.

DRTA

DRTA = Directed Reading Thinking Activity. In this activity, students predict what they think the story is about. Then they follow on their own copies as the teacher reads to find out if their predictions are correct. Periodically, the teacher will stop the reading and ask for more predictions on what will happen next. Then reading continues to see if predictions are accurate. In a typical short story, the students will make four to five predictions.

SOAR

SOAR is a reading/study strategy similar to SQ3R. It helps students to better organize and remember their expository reading and helps them to better prepare for tests.

S = Survey. In this step, students learn to precheck the reading to make a determination of how user friendly it is. They do this by looking for the author's use of pictures, charts, maps, graphs, introduction and summary, margin notes and glossary. The more of these items the reading has, the more user-friendly it is.

O = Organize. In this step, students learn to organize what they have read. Typical organizational techniques include summarizing, outlining, mapping, graphing, and charting.

A = Anticipate. In this step, students learn to anticipate or predict test questions. Students learn about the various ways to predict. For example, teachers intentionally or unintentionally give clues to their tests by stressing something not in the book, writing something on the board, repeating important information and asking questions about material. Students also learn to predict by turning titles and headings into questions and by looking for main ideas and turning them into questions.

R = Recite and Review. In this step, students learn the importance of going over material with enough repetition to commit it to memory. They learn that writing the material or manipulating the material through the organizational techniques mentioned above is frequently more effective than just rereading it.

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