

# The Phonics Bulletin

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Phonics Special Interest Group*

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## Changes in Brain Function in Children with Dyslexia after Training

by **Elise Temple**

Department of Human Development  
Cornell University

### Introduction

#### *Developmental Dyslexia*

Developmental dyslexia is defined simply as difficulty reading despite the intelligence, motivation, and education necessary for successful reading [1]. Its prevalence is still an active area of research but has been estimated at any where between 5 and 17% of the

population, therefore representing a very large national and international concern [1]. Studies have shown that the reading deficits of children with developmental dyslexia have persisted into adolescence and even adulthood. The disorder cannot be explained as a simple developmental lag [1]. A number of different methods have suggested a neurobiological basis for the disorder, but the fundamental cause (or causes) remains unknown and is an active area of research on many fronts [2, 3]. It is important to note that there are many risk factors for difficulties in reading that are not biological. For example, home literacy environment and socio-economic status can predict reading ability [4]. These factors can and should be addressed in educational and social policy. The biological basis for dyslexia is considered when those risk factors have been accounted for and a reading deficit remains.

#### *Importance of Phonological Awareness*

A developing consensus among many researchers is that developmental dyslexia is characterized by difficulties in phonological processing, specifically phonological awareness which is the ability to identify and manipulate the sound structure of words [1, 4]. Individuals with dyslexia have impaired phonological skills, including the ability to distinguish rhyming sounds, count the syllables of words, and sound out novel or "pseudo-words" (e.g., "stroat" or "train"). Phonological awareness skills are thought to be a required foundation for both normal-reading and dyslexic children to benefit from phonics instruction.

#### *Auditory Processing*

In addition to a deficit in phonological processing, individuals with dyslexia have been shown, by some researchers, to have a more fundamental deficit in auditory

processing, specifically auditory processing of rapid auditory sounds that are entering the nervous system in the 10's of milliseconds [5, 6]. This deficit in processing rapid auditory stimuli is thought to impact language and subsequently reading because some of the sounds in language, or phonemes, differ only in frequency changes that occur in the first 40-50 ms of the sound. The idea behind the rapid auditory processing hypothesis of developmental dyslexia is that without this ability to detect rapid auditory signals the child is unable to distinguish certain phonemes and develops an inadequate or "fuzzy" understanding of the phonology or sounds of his/her language. This inadequate understanding of the sounds of the words in the language is especially problematic when the child learns to read and is required to map letters onto their appropriate sounds.

#### *Functional Brain Imaging*

With the advent of new technology that allows us to visualize brain function in adults and children, researchers have begun to explore brain function and possible dysfunction in adults, and more recently children with developmental dyslexia. There are a few methods available to measure brain function in children. The type used in the current study is called functional magnetic resonance imaging or fMRI. fMRI is a variant of traditional MRI, which is used for visualization of any soft tissue inside the body (including the structure of the brain and spinal cord).

While MRI allows us to see the structure of the brain, fMRI allows us to see the *function* of the brain. The technique is based on the fact that when you think, see, or imagine there is an increase in brain function (neurons firing) in specific and localized parts of the brain.

Increased brain function causes an increase in blood flow. The increase in blood flow, brings about an increase in oxygen, that can be measured by fMRI. More oxygen occurs naturally in areas of the brain that are working harder. The technique is entirely noninvasive (it requires no injections or imaging contrasts) and can be used safely in children.

### *Brain Function in Dyslexia*

Studies of brain function in dyslexia using this and other techniques have shown people with dyslexia seem to have a neural disruption in phonological processing as well as the behavioral deficit described earlier. A number of studies, using different methods and subject groups, have found that when people with dyslexia are asked to do some tasks that require phonological processing they have less brain function (as compared to normal reading controls) in a specific brain area. This decreased activity is localized to a part of the brain on the left side called the temporo-parietal cortex, a region of the brain located a little behind and above the ear [2]. (See figure.) This decrease in brain function has been shown in adults with dyslexia and even non-English speaking adults with dyslexia.

More recently, children with dyslexia have also been shown to have decreased activity in this brain region, suggesting that the disruption may be fundamental to the disorder and not an effect of years of compensation. What has not been known is the extent to which this decrease in brain function could be changed with training or education.

### *The Current Study*

The current study [7] was designed to test whether this decrease in activity could be changed in children with dyslexia. We hypothesized that we might be able to see changes in brain function in children with dyslexia after remediation and we expected two types of changes. One type of change we might see would be a normalizing of the activity in the left temporo-parietal region discussed above. We might see increases in activity in this region, bringing the dyslexic brain closer to the normal-reading brain. We also expected that we might see increased activity in other regions of the brain, perhaps reflecting a compensatory effect of the training on brain function.

### **Methods**

#### *Training program*

The training program used in the study was Fast ForWord Language (www.scilearn.com), which focuses on

auditory processing and oral language through an intensive and adaptive computer program [8, 9]. One unique feature of the program is a focus on training children to discriminate rapid auditory signals. It also emphasizes other aspects of oral language, including auditory attention, memory, phonological processing, and listening comprehension. The training lasted approximately 8 weeks and included 100 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

### *Experimental Design*

The study included children 8-12 years old with dyslexia (n=20) who underwent fMRI scans before and after training. In addition, 12 normal-reading children underwent two fMRI scans about 8 weeks apart to control for any practice effects, normal development, and scan-rescan effects. The children performed a phonological processing task while undergoing fMRI. The task was a simple rhyming task. Each child was shown two letters and asked to push a button if the names of the two letters rhymed with each other (e.g., "T" and "D" rhyme, whereas "G" and "K" do not). This was compared to a matching task where the child simply indicated if the two letters were the same letter (e.g., "P" and "P"). The rhyming task was designed to require phonological analysis of the letters' names, but was simple enough for a poor or beginning reader to perform.

By comparing the brain function during the rhyming task with the brain function during the matching task, we could focus on the brain function specifically associated with phonological analysis rather than orthographic processing of letters or other task demands (like pushing a button, being in an MRI machine, etc.).

### **Results**

#### *Reading and Language Ability*

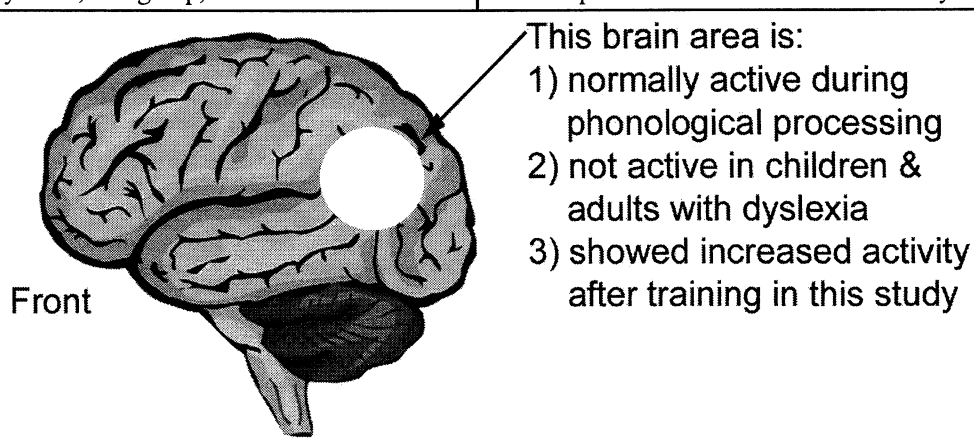
We found that the children with dyslexia, as a group, demonstrated

improved performance on reading measures after the training program. Their performance on the Woodcock Johnson Reading Master subtests improved significantly and, as a group, was now in the normal range. (WJR-MT scores: Word Identification: pre training = 78.2, post training = 86.0,  $p < 0.0005$ ; Word attack: pre training = 85.5, post training 93.7,  $p < 0.0001$ ; Passage Comprehension: pre-training = 83.3, post training = 88.9,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similar improvements were seen in oral language measures (CELF-3: receptive: pre training = 92.5, post training = 101.3,  $p < 0.001$ ; expressive: pre training = 95.0, post training = 102.2,  $p < 0.006$ ).

### *Brain Function*

In our analysis of brain function, we found a number of brain areas that showed changes, after training, in the children with dyslexia. In line with our expectations, we did see an increase in the left temporo-parietal cortex in the children with dyslexia after training. This region was near the region which had been shown to be under-active in these children compared to normal reading children. This increase in brain function had a normalizing effect, in that it brought the brain function of children with dyslexia closer to that of normal-reading children. This normalization was not complete however; the children with dyslexia did not reach normal levels of activity in this region.

In addition, we saw increased activity in a number of regions not normally involved in phonological processing. These regions included parts of the right side of the brain which are mirror images of the normal left-sided language processing areas. These increases may reflect more of a compensatory effect of the training, where the right side of the brain gets involved to help the damaged left side. Right-sided help for language in people who have left-sided damage has been reported in studies of stroke recovery



where increased right-sided activity was associated with improved language after stroke.

In summary, we found a partial amelioration of the disrupted brain function seen in children with dyslexia after training; they showed partial normalization of activity in the left temporo-parietal cortex. In addition, we saw compensatory effects of training, especially in increased activity in the right side of the brain.

## Conclusion

This study was the first to use fMRI to explore possible changes in brain function after behavioral training in children with dyslexia. The training used was Fast ForWord Language, a training program that focuses on oral language and auditory processing. After training, the children with dyslexia improved in reading and language ability. In addition, after training, the children with dyslexia showed changes in brain function. These changes in brain function were both “normalizing” and “compensating.”

Normalization of brain function in children with dyslexia included increased brain function in the left temporo-parietal cortex, above and behind the left ear. After training there was increased activity in this region, which had been shown to be under-active in children and adults with dyslexia. “Compensating” effects of the training included increased activity in regions of the brain that are were not normally active during such tasks. These increases were seen especially in the right side of the brain, in mirror images to the traditional left-sided language areas, perhaps reflecting a tendency by the right side of the brain to compensate for the left side’s inability to function fully. This study shows that the brain dysfunction seen in dyslexia can be affected by behavioral training.

The implications of this study are numerous. First, this study shows that it is possible to study the brain effects of training in human children. Previous research on brain plasticity had been largely limited to animal research. This study opens up the possibility for further research that explores different interventions and educational strategies. Second, this study shows that a specific remediation program, Fast ForWord Language, resulted in changes in brain function in children with dyslexia while improving their reading ability. Finally this study shows that previously reported brain dysfunction in dyslexia can be at least partially ameliorated. These results should help give hope to the individuals

struggling with dyslexia and their families and teachers. Dyslexia is not simply a matter of a child not “trying hard enough.” This brain research has shows us that the biological aspects of dyslexia can be changed and at least partially normalized.

Please see the actual scientific article for more detail on this study: Temple, E., et al., *Neural deficits in children with dyslexia ameliorated by behavioral remediation: Evidence from fMRI*. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A, 2003. 100(5): p. 2860-2865.

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## Confessions of a Psycholinguist

by Janet C. Richards

Professor of Literacy  
University of Southern Mississippi

I never thought I would compose a short article for a newsletter entitled *The Phonics Bulletin*. As my students and colleagues know, I am a psycholinguist. My convictions are secure, firm, and air tight. Concepts like multiple literacies, integrated instruction, and transmediation are music to my ears. Not many of my peers have even heard me say the words “skills” or “phonics.” In fact, a superintendent of a school district near my university recently said, “I know there is a

professor at USM who doesn’t teach phonics.” (He meant me.)

So why am I writing this short piece? Well, for the past month, I have been working with Noah, a nine-year old third grader who is a struggling reader. I discovered that Noah has problems making inferences. For example in the Creole folk tale, *The Talking Eggs* (San Souci, 1989), the author explains that Blanche had to iron the clothes each morning using an old iron filled with hot coals. I asked Noah if he thought Blanche’s family had electricity and he replied, “Well only a little because charcoal only makes a little electricity.”

I also discovered that Noah’s vocabulary is not commensurate with his age or grade level. In a recent shared book experience, he could not figure out the meaning of such words as tiara, northland, and motionless. In addition, I have come to recognize that although Noah uses context clues in a reasonably expedient way, he has little knowledge of long and short vowels, or phonics generalizations. He cannot analyze polysyllabic words, and he lacks understanding about letter/sound relationships. Thus, he has little “ability to manipulate letters, sounds, and spellings to read words never seen before” (Gipe, 1998, p.191). Unless Noah develops a good understanding of these analysis skills, he will never become an independent reader.

## Program of Instruction

Here is the program of instruction I have devised for Noah. Since reading is first and foremost comprehension, we will continue to engage in pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies. We also will connect reading and writing as much as possible. For example, we will dialogue journal, complete cloze passages, and write letters to favorite authors and story characters. In addition, we will work together using a phonics program titled Multisensory Phonics. I devised this program years ago as a first grade teacher and I’d forgotten its effectiveness.

Multisensory Phonics supports students’ understanding of phonics (short and long vowels, consonants, and blends) through music, visual arts, and hand signals. For example, when students study the short /a/ sound, they learn a short song/chant: “a,a,a,a,a,apple, apple.” They see a drawing of an apple, and they use a hand signal that mimics someone eating an apple. In the few weeks I’ve been using this program with Noah, I’ve seen an improvement in his ability to analyze unknown polysyllabic words. Noah can now find the vowels in a word,

blend the syllables, and verify the meaning of the word by using context clues.

### Am I Still a Psycholinguist?

Am I still a psycholinguist? Yes! But, my work with Noah has shown me that readers who are experiencing difficulties usually need to learn how to analyze words and blend word parts. Effective phonics instruction allows struggling students to become independent readers.

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## Developing Beginning Reading Skills in Kindergarten Children

by **Rebecca Haslemann**

G.W. Hellyer School  
 Franklin McKinley School District  
 San Jose, California

### Background

Since I began teaching seven years ago, the standards and expectations for kindergarten students have been raised dramatically. In June kindergartners now need to be able to read a level-four Developmental Reading Assessment Book (Beaver, 1997), which is fairly predictable with numerous sight words. In order for me to get each of my students to meet this standard, I needed to look critically at my teaching, keep what was working, and change what was not.

In the spring of 2002, I engaged in a pilot study with an at-risk kindergarten student. I selected John Shefelbine and Katharine K. Newman's *Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words* (SIPPS) (2001) as my instructional program. After two weeks of instruction my case study child a) showed growth in her ability to phonemically blend and segment phonemes, b) increased her concepts about print, and c) learned nine more sight words. Because of my success with her, I conducted a more complete research project, using my entire class, with a critical eye on two students: Thyda and Miguel.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All students have pseudo names

### The Research to Support SIPPS

An abundance of research supports the theory that phonemic awareness is a "prerequisite for understanding the alphabetic principle, namely that letters stand for the sounds in spoken words" (Griffith & Olson, 1992, p. 522), and that phonemic awareness is an early predictor of reading achievement (Griffith & Olson, 1992; Juel, 1996; Snider, 1995; Yopp, 1992, 2000; Adams, 2001). Having a strong base in phonemic awareness allows students to use the alphabetic principle and become more skilled readers and writers, but phonemic awareness instruction alone is not enough.

According to Pressley (1998), the most salient problem in learning to read is learning to decode. Insufficient ability to segment words and blend sounds into words poses an insurmountable obstacle to reading and comprehending text. Pressley's recommendation, therefore, is to provide students with balanced literacy, which includes systematic phonics and sight word instruction. While the literature is clear on the need to directly teach phonemic awareness, phonics, and sight words, recommendations for the best program to use with kindergarten students is not as well researched.

### The Intervention

I began by collecting baseline data on my two students in September 2002, using a) the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory Emergent Literacy Tests, b) the Test of Basic Phonics and Irregular Sight Words from the SIPPS Beginning Level manual, and c) Marie Clay's letter identification and writing vocabulary. I conducted the tests again, thirteen weeks later, to see if there was improvement.

The SIPPS program has incremental and systematic daily lessons that consist of five components: phonemic awareness, isolated phonics sounds and spellings, sight words, a short word dictation, and a story that concentrates on sight words and phonics patterns previously introduced. Lessons follow the same format every day and take between 15 to 20 minutes.

Each day, I gathered my whole class on the carpet and we began the SIPPS lesson by reading the story chart from the previous day. We practiced phoneme position and oral blending of syllables, I introduced new sounds for the lesson, reviewed sight words and read the new story chart. Then we broke up into smaller groups of five to six students, and finished the SIPPS lessons doing the word dictation and independent reading of the story.

### Results

At the beginning of my study, Thyda and Miguel both had a firm grasp on letter knowledge and sounds as well as concepts about print (CAP). However, they both had difficulty with phoneme segmentation and oral blending.

By the end of the thirteen weeks of SIPPS instruction, Thyda and Miguel had improved in most areas. Both students were able to orally blend sounds together. Miguel mastered phoneme segmentation and Thyda was saying the sounds in the words but was not actually segmenting each sound. Thyda learned seven new sight words and Miguel learned twenty-two. They were both able to write more words when given the writing vocabulary assessment, and they both started to read short vowel words.

I have seen positive results in my students' attitudes toward reading and an increase in their reading levels. The SIPPS model was a structured way for me to teach phonemic awareness skills to my students while also having them practice reading text.

### Hints for other teachers

The following three modifications to the SIPPS procedures improved my students' success: 1) begin the SIPPS model *after* students have learned some of the letter names and sounds, 2) have students read the story chart and practice the sight words and phoneme play as a whole group instead of in a small group, and 3) expose students to a new text every day and give them opportunities to practice reading the familiar texts during independent reading time.

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## Scientifically Based Efficacy Research on Emergent Reading Skills

by Anne L. Fetter  
Manager, Research  
Leap Frog School House

### Introduction

In recent years, the focus of politicians, policy makers, and educational administrators has shifted back to basics: reading, writing and arithmetic. The current climate of *No Child Left Behind* puts an emphasis on “adequate yearly progress” and “data driven decision making.” As a result, there is increasing pressure on educators to show that the methods and curricula they have selected are best for increasing performance.

Early childhood education is also under scrutiny, as children are expected to start kindergarten “ready to learn.” Even such organizations as Head Start are being pushed towards higher standards of achievement. Early literacy skills are one of the most important areas of focus for early childhood educators; early literacy experts are calling for careful attention to beginning reading in particular. Three important building blocks of early literacy, in addition to being exposed to reading and other literate behaviors in the home, are school-based programs in alphabets, phonemic awareness, and phonics.

### Scientifically Based Research

The research basis that forms the foundation of educational programs should be part of a cyclical and reciprocal process and should be examined in conjunction with findings from scientifically-based validity and efficacy research. The U.S. Department of Education’s *What Works Clearinghouse* (<http://w-w-c.org/about.html>), calls for research to be systematic, rigorous, and open in design (inviting peers and professionals to examine one another’s methodology and raw data).

### The Literacy Center

This paper outlines one efficacy study on early literacy conducted using *The Literacy Center*. *The Literacy Center* (TLC) is an interactive, multisensory program that provides explicit, direct

instruction in early literacy skills including phonemic awareness and phonics. *The Literacy Center* curriculum includes a teacher’s manual consisting of a 35-week curriculum for explicit, direct instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics using all the electronic tools in TLC. Each module contains detailed lesson plans and ongoing assessments. One tool, the LeapDesk™ workstation speaks the names of letters of the alphabet and produces their phonic pronunciations in the context of specific words. Students see and feel the shapes of letters, then hear the letter names and sounds. The writing pad lights up upper and lower case letters for tracing. Teachers can print assessment reports for 40 students. The LeapMat™ learning surface teaches letter-name recognition, letter-sound association, and spellings of three-letter words. The LeapPad® platform uses interactive technology to have students read specific words, sound out decodable words, and read entire pages. Students can hear the story along with the book, touch words to hear them pronounced, touch individual phonemes to hear the sound association, and drag the “electronic pen” across the words to hear the sounds blend. TLC also includes interactive decodable books and phonics skill cards, and colorful classroom posters that focus on specific letter patterns. A music CD teaches phonemic awareness. Also included were teaching strategies cards, letter neck cards, letter tiles, sight word cards, and a flip card holder.

### Pre-K Literacy Study

The School Readiness Language Development Program within the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) participated in this research study designed to measure the effectiveness of TLC. This was a pretest-posttest design, cross-sectional efficacy study conducted during the entire 2001-2002 academic year. Students’ early literacy skills were measured in the fall, and after the intervention, in the spring. There were statistically significant gains for those students who received the intervention (a 74% gain in early literacy skills) compared to students in the control group who received the standard district literacy materials (a 37% gain in early literacy skills). Early literacy skills were measured through letter-word identification (Woodcock Johnson III), blending sounds (Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing), and phonemic awareness (LeapDesk Assessment).

### Sample

Three Los Angeles Unified School District schools with half-day pre-kindergarten classrooms were selected by the district to participate in the program, and three were selected to serve as controls. Forty-five percent (45%) of the children were girls, and 55% were boys. There were 137 children (68 treatment, 69 control) who participated in this study, and their average age was 52.5 months at the beginning of September. Forty percent (40%) of the children spoke English as their primary language and 10% were bilingual in the fall. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the children were Hispanic, 22% Caucasian, 12% African-American, and 6% Asian-American. The treatment and control groups were matched by both age and gender as well as on all pretest measures.

### Method

The existing district-wide literacy program was Creative Curriculum. The treatment group used TLC in addition to Creative Curriculum, while the control group only used Creative Curriculum. Teachers were asked to implement TLC for 60-90 minutes daily. Assessments were conducted one-on-one with each child in English at three points throughout the school year (in October, January, and May).

In order to determine the impact of the intervention as a supplemental program, a battery of pre and post-tests was administered at the beginning and end of the study. This battery of early literacy tests included the Woodcock Johnson III (letter-word identification), the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (blending sounds), and a LeapDesk assessment (phonemic awareness). An index of key reading skills was computed by summing the raw skills for each of these three assessments by child, both for pretest and posttest.

### Results

Both groups showed statistically significant gains from pretest to posttest (at  $\alpha = .05$ ). Pre- and posttest results on this composite index of key reading skills demonstrate that students who received the intervention performed 37% better (74% gain vs. 37% gain) on tests of key reading predictors than students in the control group. This is illustrated in Figure A, on page 6.

### Conclusion

This LAUSD study found a statistically significant difference in



- ★ Marcia McGowan
- ★ Patricia McKenzie
- ★ Basha Milhollen
- ★ Julie Oakford
- ★ Susan Okeefe
- ★ Tamaye Ota
- ★ Karen Pasquini
- ★ Lucy Pearson
- ★ Deanna Preiss
- ★ Mary Rector
- ★ Robyne Ridge
- ★ Eugenia Ropp
- ★ Jeanette Sleeper
- ★ Lori Snowden
- ★ Mari Stangland
- ★ Jeannie Strudas
- ★ Heidi Verkler
- ★ Suzanne Vishanoff
- ★ Kendra Wagner
- ★ Mildred Ward
- ★ Jan Wellman
- ★ Wendy Whitnah
- ★ Kathleen Wilson
- ★ Kay Wulf
- ★ Mary Youngblood

If you don't see your name, you either 1) joined after last year's roster was submitted to IRA for validation, or 2) have not paid your IRA membership fee, or 3) have not submitted your information to the Phonics SIG secretary yet. To become an active member (or to check on your status), please forward your name and IRA membership number, or name and address, to SIG secretary, Rochelle Ireland D'Ardenne, at [rireland@mail.mcps.org](mailto:rireland@mail.mcps.org).

## Membership Drive

The IRA Phonics Special Interest group is eagerly seeking to increase its membership in order to qualify for a longer session at future annual IRA meetings! (When we have 100 members in our SIG, we will be granted a 2-3/4 time slot at the annual conference, instead of a 1-1/4 hours time slot.)

If you know any phonics fans please solicit their membership. Direct interested folks to e-mail their Phonics SIG membership request to Rochelle Ireland-D'Ardenne at: [rireland@mcps.org](mailto:rireland@mcps.org). An interest in phonics and current, paid-up membership in the International Reading Association are the only requirements for membership in the Phonics Special Interest Group.

In order to become an officially registered member of the Phonics SIG, each applicant must e-mail our secretary with either their name and IRA membership number, or their name and mailing address (for IRA membership verification). Remember, membership in the International Reading Association's Phonics Special Interest Group is free.

## We Love Phonics

Members of the Phonics Special Interest group and non-member interested folks are invited to join the [WeLovePhonics@yahoo.com](mailto:WeLovePhonics@yahoo.com) e-mail list. Like a listserv, or old-fashioned party line, when a member of this group sends out an e-mail, the message goes out to all other members. Membership registration in the e-mail group can only be initiated by the moderator. If you wish to join, please send your request via e-mail to Lynn Gordon at [Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu](mailto:Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu).

The official communication channel for the IRA Phonics Special Interest Group will continue to be the [WeLovePhonics@YahooGroups.com](mailto:WeLovePhonics@YahooGroups.com) e-mail group. SIG members are not required to participate in the e-mail group, but are strongly encouraged to do so. The forum features sparkling conversation and provides for efficient and inexpensive communication between group members. New and continuing members of the Phonics Special Interest Group stay informed about phonics news, speaker programs, elections, calls for proposals, and other SIG business when they sign-up with the [WeLovePhonics@YahooGroups.com](mailto:WeLovePhonics@YahooGroups.com) e-mail group. E-mail group membership, like Phonics Special Interest Group membership, is free of charge.

[WeLovePhonics@YahooGroups.com](mailto:WeLovePhonics@YahooGroups.com) is serving phonics experts across four corners of the United States, plus phonics enthusiasts in Australia, Canada, and England.

## PhonicsBulletin.info

An online version of the *Phonics Bulletin*, as well as other information about IRA's Phonics Special Interest Group will be available soon at [www.PhonicsBulletin.info](http://www.PhonicsBulletin.info). If you are interested in being the webmaster for this site, please e-mail Lynn Gordon: [Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu](mailto:Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu).

## "Phonicator" term submitted to the Oxford English Dictionary

In 2002, the word "phonicator" was officially submitted to the Oxford English Dictionary. Examples of usage in print were documented and the following definition was proposed:

**Pho·ni·ca·tor** fon'i-ka-ter *n.* 1. *Humorous slang* An educator who champions the use of phonics instruction as a method of beginning or remedial reading instruction, often used as a self-referent. "I'm a phonicator, and proud of it!" 2. *Offensive slang (rare)* Disparaging term for one who endorses the use of phonics. "Those phonicators are going to take the joy out of learning how to read." (Perhaps a blend of PHONICS and FORNICATOR.) *Variant spelling: fonicator.*

If you notice an example of the term "phonicator" used in speech or print, please mail or fax (818-610-0306) a complete reference citation along with a xerographically reproduced copy of the quote, if published, to:

Dr. Lynn Gordon  
Department of Elementary Education  
California State University, Northridge  
18111 Nordhoff Street  
Northridge, CA 91330

Gordon is studying the connotative evolution and usage of the term, as phonics experts embrace "phonicator" and make it their own.

## Officers:

The following volunteers serve, through May of 2004, as officers of the Phonics Special Interest Group:

### Chair

Lynn Gordon, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor,  
California State University, Northridge  
18111 Nordhoff Street  
Northridge, CA 91330  
Phone: 818-677-7894  
Fax: 818-610-0306  
e-mail: [Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu](mailto:Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu)

### Assistant Chair:

Basha Millhollen  
Administrator of Curriculum and Instruction  
Santa Barbara County Education Office  
e-mail: [millhollen@sbceo.org](mailto:millhollen@sbceo.org)

### Secretary:

Rochelle Ireland-D'Ardenne  
Reading Supervisor  
Montgomery County Public Schools  
e-mail: [rireland@mail.mcps.org](mailto:rireland@mail.mcps.org)

### Phonics Bulletin Editors:

Kendra Wagner:  
Reading Specialist & Literacy Consultant  
e-mail: [Kendra9@mindspring.com](mailto:Kendra9@mindspring.com)

Lynn Gordon, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor,  
California State University, Northridge  
18111 Nordhoff Street (over)

Northridge, CA 91330  
 Phone: 818-677-7894  
 Fax: 818-610-0306  
 e-mail: Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu

## Elections:

Next year, the Phonics SIG will elect new officers. Please consider serving. Monitor the WeLovePhonics@Yahoo Groups.com e-mail group for nomination and election instructions.

## Panel of Readers

Reading and literacy scholars and professionals in the Phonics Special Interest Group are invited to submit applications to join the Phonics SIG panel of readers. Additional readers are sought to review presentation proposals and article submissions. Interested SIG members should submit their resumes and cover letters via e-mail to the Phonics SIG Chair, Lynn Gordon (Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu), and Assistant Chair, Basha Millhollen (millhollen@sbceo.org).

## Request for Proposals Due May 25, 2003

The International Reading Association's Phonics Special Interest Group is now accepting proposals for presentations at the 49<sup>th</sup> annual IRA convention in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 2004. The convention dates are from May 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>. Our speaker meeting will probably be scheduled on Thursday morning, the 13<sup>th</sup>. Please e-mail your proposal to Phonics SIG chair, Dr. Lynn Gordon at Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu. Please put the text of your proposal in the body of the email. Do not send attachments. Mailed applications will not be accepted.

Please indicate the following:

1. Your name, e-mail address, institutional affiliation (if applicable), your home address, and phone number/s where you can be reached.
2. Title of your presentation.
3. Amount of time needed. Please indicate 10-minutes, 20-minutes, or 30-minutes. (Yes, we are interested in relatively brief presentations, as the Phonics SIG will probably be given a short session again next year.)

4. Provide a summary or description of your presentation.

Presentation proposals for the International Reading Association's Phonics Special Interest Group may address any topic related to systematic, explicit phonics, including lesson plan ideas and practice activities, or related topics such as phonemic awareness, word families/onsets/rimes, decodable print, dictation, phonics assessments, phonics resources, history of phonics, back-to-phonics reading reform initiatives, "new" phonics, and phonics research.

The room will be equipped with an overhead projector.

Please note that IRA guidelines require that everyone register for the conference. As a professional, nonprofit organization, IRA is unable to reimburse program participants for travel or living expenses. Registration and additional information about the 2004 IRA convention will be made available several months prior to the conference at [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)

The deadline for proposals to present at the 2004 annual meeting is May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Decisions will be e-mailed to applicants on or before June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

## Request for Submissions

The submission deadline for next year's Phonics Bulletin is March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004. Please submit all documents electronically to the editors at Kendra9@mindspring.com and Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu.

The Phonics Bulletin welcomes the following:

- Brief articles, essays, and research reports related to phonics instruction, phonemic awareness, decodable print, phonics dictation, phonics assessments, phonics and reading comprehension, word families/onsets/rimes, phonics curricula and resources, reading achievement scores, history of phonics, phonics and reading reform initiatives, phonics ethnography, pedagogy, policies, and new phonics/old phonics commentaries. Articles should run from 500 to 3000 words. Include a title for the article, your full name, and institutional affiliation.
- Brief reviews of phonics books, resources, and instructional materials. We solicit reviews in the following categories:
  1. Phonics books (reference books & books for teachers.)
  2. Commercial reading programs

3. Instructional phonics materials (including manipulatives, toys, and games)
4. Decodable books/readers/series
5. Reading methodology college textbooks
6. Videos (for students or teachers)
7. Phonics software
8. Websites (only informational, non-commercial websites with a focus on phonics)
9. Online articles about phonics

Word limit for reviews is 100 words (for categories 1 - 7) and 25 words for website reviews or online article reviews (categories 8 and 9).

Please follow the following format for reviews (in categories 1-7):

Line 1: Identify the name or title of the book or product.

Line 2: Provide the ISBN number if this is a book.

Line 3: Provide name of publisher (or distributor) and year of publication.

Line 4: Provide the publisher's (or distributor's) contact website, if available.

Line 5+: Provide a 100-word description and review highlighting features, utility, price, limitations, etc. (Note: if the item is an instructional toy, game, or manipulative for teaching reading, indicate whether the item is appropriate for whole class, small group, or one-on-one instruction.)

Next line: Indicate price.

Next line: How many stars (0 to 5)?

Next line: (Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_)

## Statement of Purpose

The IRA Phonics Special Interest Group was formed to provide a supportive forum where reading professionals with expertise in systematic, explicit phonics instruction could meet to share lesson plans and practice activities, plus discuss related topics such as phonemic awareness, word families/onsets/rimes, decodable print, dictation, phonics assessments, phonics resources, history of phonics, back-to-phonics reading reform initiatives, "new" phonics, and phonics research. The group prepares an annual peer-reviewed newsletter, *The Phonics Bulletin*, highlighting recent research on phonics, essays, and reviews of phonics-related publications. IRA's Phonics Special Interest Group is not associated with, nor does it stem from any commercially published program or package. Any member of IRA may join and there is no Phonics Special Interest Group membership fee.



**Where to send  
reviews/comments/suggestions**

The editors welcome reader comments and suggestions for the Reviews section. Books and materials reviewed in this section are in no way advocated or endorsed by all members of the Phonics Bulletin production team, the Phonics Special Interest Group as a whole, or the International Reading Association. **Opinions expressed are solely those of the reviewers.** Send reviews, comments, and suggestions to:  
Lynn.Gordon@csun.edu  
and Kendra9@mindspring.com

# Reviews

Reviewers assign stars to items according to this rating system:

- ★★★★★ = highly recommended
- ★★★★ = recommended
- ★★★ = recommended (some limitations)
- ★★ = needs improvement or significant limitations
- ★ = severe limitations/not recommended
- 0 = do not purchase

## Books about Phonics

### **Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print**

by Marilyn Jager Adams  
ISBN 0-262-01112-3  
Published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1990  
www.mitpress.mit.edu  
Adams provides a scholarly, comprehensive, and definitive synthesis of basic and applied research on beginning reading through 1990. Topics include the history of the English alphabet, the controversies surrounding phonics instruction, issues and research in early reading instruction, basic perceptual processes, the processes involved in identifying sounds, letters, words, and meaning, and the processes involved in learning to read. In many ways, this enlightening and enjoyable reference report is an updated version of Jeanne Chall's *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. A classic reference book for every phonicator's library.  
Price: \$27.95.

Rating = ★★★★★  
(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### **Why Johnny Can't Read**

By Rudolf Flesch  
ISBN 0-06-091340-1  
Published by Harper & Row in 1955  
www.harpercollins.com  
This enduring *phonics-first* treatise is still in print (as a paperback) and still, almost 50 years later, an invigorating, right-on-target masterpiece. Flesch, an early evangelist for reading reform, rails against the whole-word or "look-and-say" method of reading instruction prevalent in that era, and provides clear, straight-forward instructions and exercises for teaching reading using pure phonics. *Why Johnny Can't Read* makes a fascinating reading assignment in teacher education reading methodology courses, serving as both a historical document and ageless, practical guide to the nuts and bolts of basic phonics instruction. Great for parents, teachers, teaching credential candidates, tutors, and reading specialists.  
Price = \$13.00  
Rating = ★★★★★  
(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### **Teaching and Assessing Phonics: Why, What, When, How**

by Jeanne S. Chall & Helen M. Popp  
ISBN 0-8388-2314-9  
Published by the Educators Publishing Service, Inc. in 1996  
www.epsbooks.com  
The late, great Jeanne Chall, famous author of *The Great Debate* and former founder and director of the Harvard Reading Laboratory wrote this wonderful, slim volume with her Harvard University colleague, Helen Popp. This book is an excellent reference for teachers or anyone seeking information about phonics and phonics instruction. The guide covers the why, what, when, and how of phonics, and also provides suggestions for assessing student progress and providing remedial instruction.  
Price \$20.95.  
Rating = ★★★★★  
(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### **Phonics from A to Z: A Practical Guide**

by Wiley Blevins  
ISBN 0-590-31510-2  
Published by Scholastic Professional Books in 1998  
www.scholastic.com  
Blevins makes a clear and cogent argument for the role of direct phonics

instruction in helping students become fluent readers. Blevins discusses ten important research findings about phonics and describes many practical, engaging activities for teaching phonemic awareness and phonics. An excellent resource for anyone who wants to learn how to teach reading through phonics. I love this book.  
Price: \$16.95  
Rating = ★★★★★  
(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### **Teaching Phonics & Word Study in the Intermediate Grades: A Complete Sourcebook**

by Wiley Blevins  
ISBN 0-439-16352-8  
Published by Scholastic Professional Books  
This book complements Blevins's *Phonics from A to Z*, but this volume is designed for teachers of students in grades 3-8. Contains assessments, lessons, games, activities, fluency strategies, Greek and Latin roots, syllabication, and review of current research. A good reference for teachers of students in the upper-elementary and middle school grades.  
Price: \$19.95  
Rating = ★★★★★  
(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### **Phonics Patterns: Onset and Rhyme Word Lists, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

by Edward Fry in 1996  
ISBN 0-87673-026-8  
Published by Laguna Beach Educational Books  
This is a helpful book containing phonogram word lists. I've used it for planning phonics lessons, word games, dictation practice, and spelling lists. All you need is a chalkboard and you're ready to teach.  
Price: \$8.99  
Rating = ★★★★★  
(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### **Spelling Through Phonics, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

by Marlene J. McCracken and Robert A. McCracken  
ISBN 1-895411-86-6  
Published by Peguis Publishers in 1996  
www.peguis.com  
This handy spiral-bound teacher's manual offers good suggestions for creating a phonics-based spelling program in grades K-3. Also features word lists and practical advice for spelling and writing practice.  
Price: \$22.00  
Rating = ★★★★★  
(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

## Phonics Pathways

by Dolores Hiskes

ISBN 0-9620967-3-3

Published by Dorbooks

www.dorbooks.com

A simple, practical book containing lots of phonics word lists and decodable sentences. Useful for tutors, homeschool teachers, or anyone wanting to have the content of basic phonics instruction in one place.

Price: \$32.95

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

## Commercial Reading Programs

### Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen

ISBN 0-02-180791-4 (Teacher's Kit)

ISBN 0-02-180791-9 (Student's Kit)

Published by MacGraw-Hill,

<http://128.241.185.51/mcgrawClassInfo.html>

This excellent, phonics-based beginning reading curriculum has been around for years and is perfect as a stand-alone kindergarten reading program. Students thoroughly learn the sounds of the alphabet letters, one-at-a-time (typically spending a week on each letter), and after just a few letters have been introduced begin blending these sounds together to make words. After nine letters have been introduced, students can begin reading little decodable stories that get progressively more complex as additional letters are introduced. The only drawback here is the cost. The teacher's kit is \$800.22 and each student's kit of 24 consumable letter books (and you'll need one for each student) costs \$49.23. Price = \$800.22 (Teacher's kit) \$49.23 (Student's kit, each) Rating = ★★★★★ (Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### K5 Phonics/Reading/Writing/Seatwork Curriculum

ISBN 0-262-01112-3

Published by A Beka Book

www.abeka.com

A Beka offers a traditional, non-flashy phonics program. This instructor's manual provides daily teaching plans, detailed phonics content, scope and sequence recommendations, a manuscript writing guide, and phonics word lists.

An excellent phonics resource but inappropriate for public schools due to a liberal sprinkling of Christian content.

The program is very popular with many in the homeschool world. Additional resources such as alphabet cards, phonics sounds cassettes, and phonics charts are available for purchase separately.

Price = \$39.95

Rating = ★★★ (not for public schools)

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### SIPPS Challenge Level Kit: Polysyllabic Decoding

ISBN: 0-439-35789-6

Co-publishers: Developmental Studies

Center and Scholastic

www.devstu.org

SIPPS offers an effective "Challenge" intervention program for older students (3rd grade through adult) providing strategies for decoding polysyllabic words. The program provides a daily 15-20 minute instructional routine that leaves plenty of time for students to practice applying these strategies in their grade-level literature or content area reading. The "sight syllable" component, the "morphemic transformations" (prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings), and exposure to many useful polysyllabic words give the students confidence they need to get over the fear of "big" words. After three months of using the SIPPS Challenge Level, my third- and fourth-grade "intervention" students averaged a 2-year increase in word attack skills and a 1-year increase in comprehension. Price: \$100.00 Rating = ★★★★★ (Reviewed by Wanda Ryan)

### PhonoGraphix

Published by Simon and Schuster

www.readamerica.net

The PhonoGraphix method teaches the alphabetic code focusing on segmenting, blending, and phoneme manipulation. It is straightforward, logically reasoned and easy to learn. The authors' book *Reading Reflex* lays out the entire program.

However, a good initial path for teachers doing classroom or remedial work is the *WordWork* manual. It contains well-constructed lessons and many reproducible pages. Students enjoy the lessons and catch on easily. The five-day training course and full kit helped me use the method more effectively. Additional components are available. This method works well with individuals, small groups or with a whole class. I highly recommend PhonoGraphix.

Prices: \$12.80 (*Reading Reflex*)

\$175.00 (*Word Work* kit)

\$350.00 (full kit plus training)

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Diana Lytle)

### Open Court

Published by SRA/McGraw

www.sra-4kids.com

Open Court has been widely adopted in California and is credited, by many, with raising elementary standardized reading achievement test scores for four years in a row. Known initially for the strength of its phonics program, Open Court has now branched out to attempt to become a comprehensive (and "teacher-proof," some say) curriculum. The program features scripted direct instruction lesson plans and a famous spiraling curriculum where grade level skills are taught and revisited over and over again. Critics complain about inadequate content coverage in science and social studies, breakneck speed pacing plans, constraints on teachers' academic freedom, and "one-size-fits-all" implementation policies. Impressive reading achievement test score gains keep new orders flowing to SRA/McGraw Hill, no doubt.

Price = About \$2500 to \$3000 to outfit one classroom with 20 students.

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### Houghton Mifflin Reading: A Legacy of Literacy

www.schooldirect.com

The Legacy of Literacy series was adopted by more than 300 school districts in California in 2002. This program, which features a strong beginning reading phonics component, boasts impressive correlations with improved reading achievement scores. This program is somewhat less expensive than its primary market competitor (Open Court), yet offers a very similar comprehensive reading program.

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### Frontline Phonics

www.frontlinephonics.com

This reading system was designed to teach preschool age children reading through phonics. The program combines a parent/teacher video, flashcards, a workbook, 23 beginning readers, and a 34 fun sing-a-long songs on CD. One of the big features of this program is how early the decodable books are introduced, just 9 lessons and the child is reading their first book. The readers are colorful and the stories are silly, perfect for capturing any child's attention. Not just a supplement, but a full reading system which can be used from pre-k to 3rd grade, you'll be amazed at how fast even children as young as 3 or 4 are sounding out and reading words.

Price: \$299

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Leah Weinberg)

### School Phonics

ISBN 1-58324-102-7

ISBN 1-58324-103-5B

ISBN 1-58324-104-3B

ISBN 1-58324-105-1B

Published by Didax

www.schoolphonics.com

I would not use this quirky phonics program with beginning readers but it might be okay for confident intermediate-level readers 1) who have already mastered the consonant and short vowel sounds, 2) who can already read consonant-vowel-consonant words and 3) who are ready for a fast-paced program. The teacher's manual covers 55 phonics lessons. Each lesson focuses on a single sound and teaches the spelling patterns that go with that sound. For example, lesson #2 covers long o and covers four spelling patterns: long o as in "so," long o as in "hope," long o as in "soak," and long o as in "snow." A vocabulary-intense, epic, rhyming, read-aloud, story poem about a band of teeny-weeny people called "Happychaps" is woven through the lessons and is used as a theme for the wall cards. Students read from, write in, and complete exercises in their workbooks as part of the teacher-directed lessons. Program is challenging, fanciful, and different.

Prices: \$55.00 (Teacher's Guide)

\$8.75 (Student Book 1)

\$8.75 (Student Book 2)

\$90.00 (Set of Wall Sound Cards)

Rating = ★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### Hooked on Phonics: Learn to Read

Published by Gateway Learning Corp.  
www.hop.com

When I taught kindergarten, which I did for many years, I had two instances of entering kindergartners who already knew how to read fluently. In one instance the child had just been read to a great deal and picked up the code intuitively, in the other instance, the parents admitted to having used Hooked on Phonics. The instructional program works, but does require adult supervision and participation along with a substantial time commitment. I know a grandmother who taught her third grade grandson, who had a learning disability, how to read with this program using it twice-a-week after school. This *Learn to Read* version comes with musical audiotapes, books, workbooks and is designed for ages 3 to 8. Two other Hooked on Phonics programs are also

available. The *Classic* version is designed for older struggling readers, and the *Master* version teaches advanced phonics skills. Rather pricey. You might be able to find a used kit on E-bay or borrow one from the library.

Price = \$299.94

Rating = ★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

## Phonics Workbooks

### Modern Curriculum Press Plaid Phonics

ISBN 0765226189 (Level K, color)

ISBN 0765226197 (Level A, black & white)

ISBN 076522514X (Level A, color)

ISBN 0765226219 (Level B, black & white)

ISBN 0765226200 (Level B, color)

ISBN 0765226235 (Level C, black & white)

ISBN 0765226235 (Level C, color)

Published by Modern Curriculum Press

pearsonlearning.com/mcp/phonics.cfm

Remember those old red and blue phonics workbooks? Traditional Modern

Curriculum Press workbooks are still around after more than fifty years, but are now updated and available in either black and white or color for grades kindergarten through third. (MCP now offers four workbooks, one for each grade level).

These classics are sometimes purchased by schools seeking to supplement a weak-in-phonics reading series, or by tutors or parents for students who need additional phonics skill work. The series features a teacher's manual for each grade level, well-designed/clean page layout, optional additional materials available for purchase separately. These workbooks are quite good, but let us remember that workbooks can be bad, bad, bad when they are assigned as busywork and are disconnected from meaningful instruction! The crucial lesson from history is that teachers must remember to teach interactive, engaging, and explicit phonics lessons before assigning follow-up seatwork. Given this pedagogical caveat, however, these are my favorite phonics workbooks.

Price = \$10.95 per workbook

\$49.95 per teacher's manual

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### Phonics Practice Simplified

ISBN Code: 1-57110-205-1

ISBN Code: 1-57110-206-X

ISBN Code: 1-57110-207-8

ISBN Code: 1-57110-208-6

ISBN Code: 1-57110-209-4

ISBN Code: 1-57110-210-8

Published by Essential Learning Products

www.elp-web.com

There are six phonics workbooks in this nice series, and each book has 48 pages of work. The individual workbooks are entitled: Introductions to Sounds and Words, Initial Consonants, Final & Medial Consonants, Short & Long Vowels, Vowel Combinations, Blends & Digraphs. At \$5.49 each, the books are suitable for consumable homeschool or tutoring practice, but the publisher has also authorized duplication of the materials for classroom use, so teachers might like to have one of each title for their blackline master library. No teacher's guide is offered. (Teachers, let us remember that while some well-designed worksheets can provide appropriate practice, they can be *abused* and are no substitute for interactive instruction! We must teach first, before assigning seatwork practice.) Page layout is fair.

Price = \$5.49 for each workbook

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

## Instructional Materials: manipulatives, games toys

### The Phonics Game

Published by Games2Learn.com

www.phonicsgame.com

The Phonics Game consists of 6 card games, 3 videos, a CD computer game, a sounds & spelling audio CD, and 10 phonetic readers on CD. Children are to watch phonics videos and then play card games to practice their reading skills.

(Note: the teacher on the video pronounces the sounds correctly!) The Phonics Game is appropriate as a supervised supplementary phonics practice program in schools or at home. All practice activities and assessments are interactive and oral; there are no practice sheets. It is self-contained and easy to store in its case. The colors are outstanding and illustrations are appealing. Students do seem to have fun while learning. I didn't encounter any resistance and I felt like I got my money's worth.

Price = \$199.95

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Patricia Mariani)

### PhonicsQ: The Complete Cueing System

Published by PhonicsQ in 1998

www.phonicsq.com

PhonicsQ is a collection of wall-display cards and charts illustrated with colorful,

child-friendly illustrations representing the alphabet sounds and high-frequency phonics/spelling patterns. The program could supplement any reading or spelling program and is appropriate for emerging readers, special education (K-12), ESL/ELL (K-adult), or adult learners. The boxed set includes: 116 wall cards with patterned word lists, 4 color posters (24 x 31), plus matching blackline masters, a pronunciation tape, a pre/post assessment, and an instructor's manual. The materials cover the 26 letters of the alphabet, short vowels, consonant blends, digraphs, endings and vowel combinations, open-syllable, long vowels, vowel-consonant-e, and less common single vowel sounds.

Price: \$129.00

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Kendra Wagner and Phyllis Hertzog)

### **Sound Wizard: Strategy-Building Games for Phonological Awareness**

www.thinkingpublications.com

ISBN: 1-888222-63-8

You get 138 picture cards, a CD, and a 100-page book. Sound Wizard presents 18 strategy-based card games to help children learn and practice developmentally sequenced phonological awareness skills. I use them for assessment, small group games, quick "sponge" activities, and warm-ups for reading. The materials cover: rhyme recognition and production, syllable segmentation, deletion, and blending, sound identification and matching, sound blending, sound-symbol correspondence, and sound manipulation.

Price = \$75.00

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Kendra Wagner)

### **Word Family Flip Books (and) Phonics Flip Books**

Published by Lakeshore

www.lakeshorelearning.com

Students lift and turn little flaps on these heavy duty spiral-bound word books to create phonogram or word family words like cat, sat, and bat (rime-based), or shell, shoe, and shark (onset-based). The Word Family Flip Books contain easier words (and would work better with beginning readers) and the Phonics Flip Books contain harder words. These would be nice to have in your first or second grade classroom, tutoring bag, or resource room, but the sets are pricey.

Price = \$49.95 (each set)

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### **Reading Rods**

Published by Learning Resources

www.etacuisenaire.com

Bright and colorful and designed for kids who need concrete kinesthetic input. Reading Rods are similar to those snap-together counting cubes we use for math, but instead kids snap these cubes together to build words. They're fairly expensive and, candidly, you could probably lead similar activities with cut up word cards. You'd want to sort your letter patterns ahead of time before embarking on any word-building activities. I would only attempt using Reading Rods in one-on-one or small-group practice situations, but perhaps I lack courage. Use on the carpet or distribute pieces of felt to be used as silencing mats on desk tops. The letters don't line up close enough to one another to really satisfy me.

Prices= \$149.95 (for the Alphabet and Phonemic Awareness group kit for 5 students); \$139.95 (for the Initial Consonants and Word Families group kit for 5 students); \$174.95 (for the Making Words group kit for 10 students).

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### **The Sounds Abound Program: Teaching Phonological Awareness in the Classroom**

Published by LinguiSystems

www.lingusystems.com

This phonological awareness program was developed at the Stern Center for Language and Learning by Orna Lenchner and Blanche Podhajski. You get a teacher's manual, video, and a collection of 20 games and activities sequenced by developmental levels. Students practice awareness of rhyme (7 games), syllables (4 games) and phonemes (9 games). Sounds Abound is suitable for individuals, small groups, or K-1 classrooms. 195 pictures on light cardboard are included for use with the games, although more pictures of your own, and puppets, are ideal.

Price: \$109.95.

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Kendra Wagner)

### **Alphagram Learning Materials and IEP Resources**

www.alphagram.com

Designed by a parent of a dyslexic, these top-notch supplemental materials are colorful, clear, and not too visually "busy." I have used them one-on-one and in small groups, and often recommend them to parents. The *Ready, Set, Read* teacher's guide provides 168 pages of fun, multi-sensory activities, word games,

decodable text, assessment tools, and lesson ideas for the Alphagram manipulatives. Terrific flipbooks, word-making devices, and giant letter-sound cards (purchased separately for \$12.95 to \$49.95) allow students to actually make, read, and spell thousands of syllables and words. Alphagram materials are ideal for K-1 emergent readers, but can be used for up to grade 4 for spelling or phonics intervention.

Price = \$29.95 (Teacher's manual)

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Kendra Wagner)

### **Vowel Sounds Sorting & Matching Kit**

Published by Lakeshore

www.lakeshorelearning.com

This is a fun little matching game or activity you would use after having taught the short or long vowels. (Always teach the short vowel sounds first!) The kit is appropriate for using one-on-one or with a small group. You get two plastic sorting trays (one for short vowels and one for long vowels) and a deck of picture cards. The student selects a card and identifies the name of the picture, "sun," for example. Then the student is to identify the medial sound and put it in the compartment labeled with a "u." Pretty expensive at \$19.95. Crafty types could make the same thing at home with pictures cut out of old magazines, cardstock, scissors, glue, and shoeboxes.

Price: \$19.95

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### **The Spel-Lang Tree: Roots**

Published by the JEP Foundation

www.spellangtree.org

This reasonably priced program is easy to use and developmentally appropriate for first graders. ROOTS reinforces phonemic awareness and printing practice as children internalize phonics word patterns necessary for reading and independent writing. Included assessments work well to inform instruction or remediation. I am a first grade teacher in a low SES school and most of my students are English language learners. I am extremely pleased with the efficacy of this program. I highly recommend ROOTS.

Price = 25.00

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Kimberli Lengning)

### **Pocket Chart Phonics**

ISBN 1-56911-793-4

ISBN 1-56911-791-8

ISBN 1-56911-790-X

ISBN 1-56911-795-0

ISBN 1-56911-794-2

ISBN 1-56911-792-6

Published by Learning Resources

www.learningresources.com

You take these teacher resource books apart and rip the pages along the perforations to get lots of little 2-1/2" x 2-1/2" laminated letter and picture cards. The titles include: Beginning Consonants, Short Vowels, Long Vowels, Blends, Advanced Consonants, and Advanced Vowels. Each book yields 192 cards and each book is sold separately (\$9.95), as is the pocket chart (available for \$19.95).

You would use the little cards to demonstrate word-building or word analysis in front of the class, or for practice with small groups of students. Nice quality, but rather high-priced for little cards you could make yourself.

Price: \$9.95 each

Rating = ★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

## Decodable Readers

### www.Readinga-z.com

Readinga-z.com is a nifty Internet site for teachers and homeschoolers featuring a big batch of cute decodable readers and leveled "little books" that you print-out and assemble yourself. The catch is that it's a commercial site that charges \$29.95 per/six-month subscription fee. (Discounts are available for one-year subscriptions and school/group and district licenses.)

Subscribers can download lesson plans, activity sheets, 58 decodable books, 37 sound/symbol books, 250 leveled books, 20 ABC read-aloud books, phonics flashcards, 10 poetry books, and 5 nursery rhyme books. They say new materials are added every month. Check out their preview section where you can download 30 little books for free.

Price: \$29.95 subscription for six months

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

## Reading Methodology College Textbooks

### Creating Literacy Instruction for all Children, (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)

by Thomas Gunning

ISBN 0-206-36821-2

Published by Allyn & Bacon

www.ablongman.com

If you're looking for a comprehensive college-level reading and language arts textbook that does justice to phonics,

*Creating Literacy Instruction for all Children* is a good choice. While some other reading methods textbook authors either denigrate phonics, skip the topic completely, or give a few pages of tepid lip service to the subject, Gunning really knows phonics and devotes a generous 71 pages to the topic in chapter 4.

Price = \$68.00

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### Phonics for the Teacher of Reading, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition

by Barbara J. Fox and Marion A. Hull

ISBN 0-13-026538-1

Published by Merrill Prentice Hall

www.prenhall.com

This soft-cover book is designed to be a supplement text in teacher education reading methods courses. Credential candidates can follow a self-paced program of instruction covering linguistic terminology and analysis of phonological awareness, phonics, onset and rime, and English syllables. Students read brief instructional passages and then must complete multiple fill-in-the-blank prompts. (Tip to the publishers: the font should probably be larger in a workbook like this.) Disciplined, self-starting adult learners who really want to know about phonemes, graphemes, diagraphs, and the like will be very happy with this book. The content is *very* thoroughly covered, but the tedium potential here is high.

Price: \$17.33

Rating = ★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

## Videos

### Between the Lions The Complete Collection: 35 Volume Set

ISBN 1-57807-815-6

Published by Sirius Thinking and

WGBH Boston

[http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/shop/s107\\_18.html](http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/shop/s107_18.html)

If your preschool, kindergarten, or elementary school library has some discretionary money to spend, this set of *Between the Lions* videotapes (from the award-winning PBS television series) might be a nice purchase. A few studies have shown that children who watch *Between the Lions* do better on measures of phonemic awareness and letter/sound correspondence. (Thrifty folks will keep in mind that kids can watch *Between the Lions* free on PBS, and that parents and teachers might be able to borrow the videos from the public library.)

Price: \$349.95

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### Rock 'N Learn Alphabet: Songs and Games That Make Learning Fun

ISBN 1-87848-979-8

Published by Rock 'N Learn, Inc. in 1997

In this fun 30-minute video, Alphabet Al sings a catchy alliterative pop song for each letter of the alphabet. Good for teaching auditory discrimination and sound/symbol correspondence. A final mesmerizing segment teaches proper scripting of the capital and lower-case letters. Perfect for ages 2 to 5. My twins loved this video. They'd beg, "Wanna see the ABCD guy!"

Price: \$14.95

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

## Computer Software and Computer Programs

### Lexia

Published by Lexia Learning

www.LexiaLearning.com

Lexia offers three wonderful, fun phonics-based reading instruction software packages for both home and school use.

The "family" price for the *Lexia Early Reading* CD (for ages 4 to 6) is \$96.00, the *Phonics Based Reading* program (for ages 5 to 8) is \$119, and *Reading S.O.S.* (for ages 9 to 90) is \$159.00. Lexia software is a bit pricey, but I highly recommend their products. Assessments and professional development are also available. Bulk discounts are offered for schools. I tried out the Lexia programs on my own kids and they *loved* them.

Format: Windows & Mac

Prices: \$96.00, \$119.00, and \$159.00

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### Read, Write & Type

Published by The Learning Company

ISBN 0-9676349-0-3

www.readwritetype.com

I really like this software and it's fairly priced for what you're getting: interactive phoneme segmentation and phonics practice lessons integrated with pain-free typing instruction. Marketed for ages 6 to 8, I've seen phonemically aware 4-year olds successfully using the program. The program talks to children and prompts them to hear the sounds in words and type what they hear. They simultaneously learn

the proper keyboard finger strokes (with the help of on-screen talking hands) and progress from typing single letters, to words, phrases, sentences, and short stories. The home edition is \$79.00 and comes with 18 reading books. School licenses and computer lab packs are also available. Version 3.0 comes with clickable help in Spanish, (with primary instruction and word practice in English).

Format: Windows & Mac

Price: \$79.00

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### Waterford Early Reading

Published by Pearson Digital Learning

<http://pearsondigital.com>

A very expensive, comprehensive, well-respected early reading curriculum (for grades K-2) which provides 225 hours of individualized, computer-based reading instruction. The program addresses phonological awareness, phonics, decoding, spelling patterns as well as fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation. Cost is over \$14,000 for one classroom computer station for one year. Program includes teacher training and technical support. The Waterford Early Reading program also comes with books, videotapes, and audio cassettes, and assessments. Excellent for students needing remediation, but too expensive for most schools without special grant funding.

Price: \$14,040.00 for one station

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Lynn Gordon)

### Phonics Excelerator

Published by TOPICS Entertainment

ISBN 1-59150-015-X

[www.Topics-Ent.com](http://www.Topics-Ent.com)

It's not often you find \$50 worth of excellent educational software for an 80% discount. Topics Entertainment has licensed two great software programs from HelpMe2Learn. Phonics Vowel Sounds and Phonics Consonant Game normally retail for \$24.99 each, but are available as part of this 2CD set for only \$9.99. Fun animation and interactive games help children learn the long and short vowel sounds, even tricky topics like "Y" as a vowel are covered. Children are encouraged to complete all the lessons by earning silver and gold stars in a quest to fill their Super Start Chart. One of the best phonics values around.

Format: Windows & Mac

Price: \$9.99

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Leah Weinberg)

### Reading Readiness Grades K-1

Published by School Zone Interactive

ISBN 0-88743-881-4

[www.schoolzone.com](http://www.schoolzone.com)

I find the On-Track School Zone software programs to be fun and captivating, this one included. Topics include: alphabetical order, letter recognition, rhyming words, and opposites. Fun games are offered as a reward for completing each lesson. The program is called an "electronic workbook," and the CD is packaged with a paper workbook, but the contents are almost identical to the program, useful if you want to work away from the computer, but not as additional reinforcement to the software. The biggest drawback is that the software has a limited useful life. Once you finish the game, you can start over again, but there is not much variation and children will quickly become bored after a few runs through. Although the program says K-1 (ages 4-6), it could easily be completed at one sitting by an advanced 4 year old, and definitely would be below a first grader level. Overall, a useful program to have on hand, but not the first I would buy on a limited budget.

Format: Windows & Mac

Price \$19.99

Rating = ★★★★★

Reviewed by Leah Weinberg

### Phonics 1a: Vowel Sounds

### Phonics 1b: Consonant Sounds

### Phonics 2: Intermediate Level

Published by the Help Me 2 Learn Company in 2002.

[www.helpme2learn.com](http://www.helpme2learn.com)

These programs are 3 out of the 4 programs in the Phonics Super Star Reading System. They are a progressive set of award winning computer software programs based on phonemic awareness. They feature educational songs, sound and vocabulary building with picture association, interactive games and activities, spelling activities, a tracking and motivation system. These programs are highly enjoyable yet very lesson based and instructional. They are available with a user's guide and lesson plans with blackline masters. They are appropriate as a supplement, for enrichment, for remediation instruction, for intervention, for special needs students, and for ESL. Student progress is evaluated by the Super Star data tracking and motivational system. Lab and network licenses available.

Format: Windows & Mac

Price: \$24.95

Rating = ★★★★★

(Reviewed by Dan Sheffield)

## Websites

### The Phonics Bulletin

[www.PhonicsBulletin.info](http://www.PhonicsBulletin.info)

This newsletter and future newsletters of the IRA Phonics Special Interest Group will be available at [www.PhonicsBulletin.info](http://www.PhonicsBulletin.info) soon.

### What Works Clearinghouse

[www.w-w-c.org](http://www.w-w-c.org)

The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences is developing a centralized database of effectiveness studies to provide educators, policymakers, and the public with scientific, independent, trusted information about what works in education.

### The National Right to Read Foundation

[www.nrrf.org](http://www.nrrf.org)

Terrific information and an online store.

### No Child Left Behind

[www.nochildleftbehind.gov](http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov)

The most recent federal reading reform initiative.

## Online Articles

### Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read, Kindergarten Through Grade 3

[http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading\\_first1.html](http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first1.html)

### Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read

[www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/findings.htm](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/findings.htm)

### Reading the Right Way: What research and best practices say about eliminating failure among beginning readers

by Bill Honig

[www.aasa.org/publications/sa/1997\\_09/honig.htm](http://www.aasa.org/publications/sa/1997_09/honig.htm)

### Tips for Parents

by Ed Kame'enui, Marilyn Adams, and G. Reid Lyon

[www.readingrockets.org/article.php?ID=31](http://www.readingrockets.org/article.php?ID=31)

### A Synthesis of Research on Reading from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

by Bonita Grossen

[www.nrrf.org/synthesis\\_research.htm](http://www.nrrf.org/synthesis_research.htm)

## Reading First Initiative: Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst/faq.html>

## Research Articles

1. Getting ready for reading: Early phoneme awareness and phonics teaching improves reading and spelling in inner-city second language learners by *M. Stuart*. Published in 1999 (British journal of educational psychology 69, pp 587-605)
2. Differences in word recognition based on approach to reading instruction by *K. Wilson & C. A. Norman*. Published in 1998 (Alberta journal of educational research v.44 no.2, pp 221-230)
3. Comparisons of beginning literacy programs: Alternative paths to the same learning outcome by *K. D. Traweek & V. W. Berninger*. Published in 1997 (Learning disability quarterly v.20 no.2, pp 160-168)
4. Early interventions for children with reading disabilities by *B. R. Foorman, D. J. Francis, D. Winikates, P. Metha, C. Schatschneider & J. Fletcher*. Published in 1997 (Scientific studies of reading v.1 no.3, pp 255-276)
5. Prevention and remediation of severe reading disabilities: Keeping the end in mind by *J. K. Torgesen, R. K. Wagner & C. A. Rashotte*. Published in 1997 (Scientific studies of reading v.1 no.3, pp 217-234)
6. Effects of the Sing, Spell, Read and Write program on reading achievement of beginning readers by *C. L. Bond, S. M. Ross, L. J. Smith & J. A. Nunnery*. Published in 1996 (Reading research and instruction v.35 no.2, pp 122-141)
7. Phonological recoding skill and beginning reading by *W. E. Tunmer & W. A. Hoover*. Published in 1993 (Reading and writing: An interdisciplinary journal v.5 no.2, pp 161-179)
8. Effect of phonemic awareness on the literacy development of first grade children in a traditional or a whole language classroom by *P. L. Griffith, J. P. Klesius & J. D. Kromey*. Published in 1992 (Journal of research in childhood education v.6 no.2, pp 85-92)
9. Use of the SEARCH/TEACH tutoring approach with middle-class students at risk for reading failure by *P. Mantzicopoulos, D. Morrison, E. Stone & W. Setrakian*. Published in 1992 (Elementary school journal v.92 no.3, pp 573-586)

10. Children's concepts of the nature and purpose of reading in different instructional settings by *P. A. Freppon*. Published in 1991 (Journal of reading behavior v.23 no.2, pp 139-163)
11. Experiment with a modified whole language approach in first-grade classrooms by *L. Eldredge*. Published in 1991 (Reading research and instruction v.30 no.3, pp 21-38)
12. Effects of instruction on beginning reading skills in children at risk for reading disability by *I. S. Brown & R. H. Felton*. Published in 1990 (Reading and writing: An interdisciplinary journal v.2 no.3, pp 223-241)
13. Direct instruction reading with average first-graders by *V. E. Snider*. Published in 1990 (Reading improvement v.27 no.2, pp 143-148)
14. Teaching reading to low performing first graders in rural schools: A comparison of two instructional approaches by *B. Umbach, C. Darch & G. Halpin*. Published in 1989 (Journal of instructional psychology v.16 no.3, pp 112-121)
15. Effectiveness of a direct instruction academic kindergarten for low-income students by *R. Gersten, C. Darch & M. Gleason*. Published in 1988 (Elementary school journal v.89 no.2, pp 227-240)
16. Multisensory teaching approach for reading, spelling and handwriting, Orton-Gillingham based curriculum, in a public school setting by *K. S. Vickery, V. A. Reynolds & S. W. Cochran*. Published in 1987 (Annals of dyslexia 37, pp 189-200)
17. Children with reading disorders: I. Efficacy of reading remediation by *R. Gittelman & I. Feingold*. Published in 1983 (Journal of child psychology and psychiatry and allied disciplines v.24 no.2, pp 167-191)
18. Effectiveness of intensive phonics by *G. Fulwiller & P. Groff*. Published in 1980 (Reading horizons v.21 no.1, pp 50-54)
19. Phonic versus whole-word correction procedures following phonic instruction by *D. Carnine*. Published in 1980 (Education and treatment of children v.3 no.4, pp 323-329)
20. Testing phonics: A look at children's response biases by *C. L. Blachowicz, L. B. McCarthy & D. M. Ogle*. Published in 1979 (Illinois School Research and Development v.16 no.1, pp 1-6)
21. Phonics versus look-say: Transfer to new words by *D. W. Carnine*. Published in 1977 (Reading teacher v.30 no.6, pp 636-640)

22. Effect of instruction on pupil reading strategies by *R. Barr*. Published in 1974 (Reading research quarterly v.10 no.4, pp 555-582)
23. Influence of instructional conditions on word recognition errors by *R. C. Barr*. Published in 1972 (Reading research quarterly v.7 no.3, pp 509-529)

## Who's Who in the Phonics Special Interest Group

**Denise Baker** is a Literacy Coach at Chickasaw Elementary School in Orlando, Florida. She earned her B.S. degree in Primary, Elementary, and Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) Education at Florida Southern College in May 1992. She earned a M.Ed. degree in Reading Education K-12 from the University of Central Florida in August 1997. She taught SLD Resource K-5, First Grade, Reading Recovery, and Reading Resource prior to becoming a Literacy Coach. She does numerous staff developments in the area of reading for her school and has also presented at her district's Reading Conference.

**Patricia (Pat) Benner** is retired having taught basic skills in high school, adult education and community college. She now works part-time as a consultant for various schools and literacy groups teaching volunteer tutors, including inmates in the local jails. She received her B.A. from San Francisco State University and her M.A. from San Jose State University. She holds four California teaching credentials including Reading Specialist. She is a published author of *TroubleShooter I* (now out of print but in revision), was a consultant for *TroubleShooter II*; wrote *PreGED Critical Reading Skills, Breakthrough in Critical Reading Skills* and is a co-author of *PreGED in Literature and the Arts*. She has also won awards for teaching. She believes phonics provides the structure beginning readers of any age need.

**Pat Butchko** is a first grade teacher in Buckeye Arizona where she has taught for 15 years. While she has the opportunity to retire this May, she is going for another three years teaching first graders to read and write. Pat uses *Total Reading* as a phonics component. She individualizes reading in her classroom

member of the IRA for 10-15 years. "I love their philosophy and their magazine and newspaper," reports Pat.

**Karen Cochran** is completing her 11th year as Coordinator of Secondary Reading and Learning/Language Support Programs for Frederick County Public Schools, Maryland. Mrs. Cochran earned her bachelor's degree in English/Journalism/Speech and Secondary Education from New Mexico Highlands University. She holds advanced professional certification equivalent to a master's plus 30 with a concentration in reading. Besides coordinating secondary reading programs for her district, Mrs. Cochran teaches graduate level reading classes for the Maryland State Department of Education and Hood College. She has been involved in public education for 35 years.

**E. Judith Cohen** is a faculty member at Florida International University in Miami, Florida where she teaches courses in reading and LD. She earned a B.S. in Specific Learning Disabilities (1974), M.S. in Diagnostic Teaching (1977), and Ed.D. in Exceptional Student Education (1996). Judy worked as a classroom teacher and clinician for over 25 years. She is the co-author of *Focus on Phonics: Assessment and Instruction, Building Early Language and Literacy: A Preschool Program*, and the contributing author to *FastTrack Reading* (phonics component). She believes that students must "conquer the code" in order to "master the meaning!"

**Ricki Fischer** is the District Coordinator for Dyslexia in Pasadena Independent School District, Pasadena Texas. Her career in education spans 35 years and includes teaching first, fourth, fifth and sixth grade, Title I reading, Title I Director in Howell, Michigan, and Developmental Reading for College of the Mainland, Texas City, Texas. Ricki's passion has always been the struggling reader and her cause has always been to make sure that no matter how the educational pendulum swings, phonics will not be left out of reading instruction.

**Annette Gast** is a Reading Specialist with the Pattonville School District. She has a master's degree and has been teaching (with ten years off devoted to being a stay-at-home mom) since 1973. Except for two years, she has exclusively taught special reading. For eight years, she taught Reading Recovery. Annette was a primary teacher finalist for Teacher of the Year in 2001. She has taught all levels from

preschool through college and finds kindergarten and first grade to be her real niche. Annette compares teaching reading to teaching small students how to a dance. You follow their lead and let them guide your instruction. Annette loves teaching.

**Lynn Gordon**, Ph.D. is an assistant professor of reading and literary in the Department of Elementary Education at California State University, Northridge. She earned her B.A. and M.A. from Occidental College and her Ph.D. from UCLA. Lynn currently teaches reading methods and educational psychology courses to students in the elementary teaching credential program at CSUN. Before that, she taught kindergarten and first grade for fourteen years with the Los Angeles Unified School District. Dr. Gordon founded the International Reading Association's Phonics Special Interest Group in 2002. She is the Phonics SIG's current chair, co-editor of the Phonics Bulletin, and moderator of the [WeLovePhonics@Yahogroups.com](mailto:WeLovePhonics@Yahogroups.com) e-mail group.

**Phyllis Herzog** has devoted her entire professional life to working with students with language and learning disabilities. Since receiving her B.S. in 1970 at the University of Michigan and her M.S. in 1973 at Hunter College in special education, she has taught in self-contained and resource special education classrooms and tutored privately with both LD and ELL students. Her Slingerland (Orton-Gillingham based) training taught her the necessity of good phonics instruction. Out of need, Ms. Herzog developed a picture cueing system called PhonicsQ. Since 1999, she has sold over 3,000 sets for use with emerging readers, K-12 special education students, K-adulthood ESL/ELL students and struggling adults. Ms. Herzog has great satisfaction knowing that her direct instruction and PhonicsQ have made a difference for students around the world.

**Rochelle Ireland-D'Ardenne** is a Reading Supervisor for Montgomery County (VA) Public Schools. She received her B.S. in Elementary Education from Pittsburg (KS) State University and her M.S. in Reading from Southwestern Oklahoma State University. She was selected as the New River Valley Reading Teacher of the Year in 1992 and has served on the Governing Council of the Virginia State Reading Association since 1992. Rochelle was the President of VSRA in 1999-2000 and presently chairs the Past President's Advisory Committee for that organization. She is also an adjunct

professor in the Educational Studies Department at Radford University where she teaches undergraduates who are planning to become teachers. "Most of these undergraduate students have not been taught to read using any phonics skills and, thus, they are lost when asked to teach using a balance of phonics and other strategies," notes Rochelle.

**John Paul Lapid** is a Regional Literacy Coach with the Northern Comprehensive Assistance Center at WestEd. He consults with and provides training for eight high-poverty underachieving schools that received the California Reading Excellence Act grant. He works closely with district coaches, principals, and site literacy leadership teams. Lapid also trains educators in the Reading Success Network (RSN), which provides school leadership teams with reading instruction strategies and coaching skills. Prior to working at WestEd, Lapid worked as an adjunct professor of education through the University of Guam, where he focused on language and literacy development throughout the region. John Paul has worked on Guam, Saipan, and the Marshall Islands across the grade levels.

**Diana Lytle** is a Reading Specialist at Broad Street School in the Nashua, NH. She has taught in Connecticut, New York, and New Hampshire. Diana earned her B.A. in History and Elementary Education from Emmanuel College in Boston MA., her M.S. in Developmental Reading from SUNY Albany, NY, and an M.S. in Mathematics from U Lowell, MA. She is a past president of her local IRA over 30 years. She is certified in PhonoGraphix©. She feels that her students have benefited from her improved phonics instruction.

**Don McCabe** has been the Research Director of the AVKO Dyslexia Research Foundation ([www.avko.org](http://www.avko.org)) since 1974. He is the author of *To Teach a Dyslexic*, *The Patterns of English Spelling*, and *The Teaching of Reading and Spelling: a Continuum from Kindergarten through College*. Perhaps McCabe's greatest contributions to education are the development of the "sequential spelling" technique and the concept of the five different types of English spelling: the simple, fancy, insane, tricky, and the scrunched up. McCabe has 17 years of classroom experience and 30 years as a clinician and trainer of parents as tutors.

**Marci McGowan** is a first grade teacher at H. W. Mountz School in Spring Lake,



NJ. She earned her Ed.M and teaching credential from Rutgers University. Teaching reading is “the best part of the day,” according to Marci. She has developed an extensive award-winning classroom website that features student work and parent/teacher resources : (<http://www.mrsmcgowan.com>). Marci creates interactive webpages for students to practice their phonics skills, and her collaborative online literacy projects have earned several Miss Rumphius Awards from IRA's RTEACHER LISTSERV.

**Basha Millhollen** is Administrator of Curriculum and Instruction for the Santa Barbara County Education Office, where she oversees all curriculum related activities, teacher/administrator training and the County Academic Audit Team (CAAT) for reading instruction, and programs and services for English Learners. Prior to this, Basha was Senior Research Associate/Literacy Projects Director with WestEd where she provided Program Improvement and High Priority schools with reading reform tools and training through the Reading Success Network, the Reading Excellence Act and the Secondary Literacy Support Network. She has been an Education Programs Consultant at the California Department of Education, a Director of Bilingual Programs and classroom teacher for twenty years. Basha firmly believes that all children can learn, especially if they are taught [to read]!

**Susan O'Keefe** has been a Resource Teacher for 30 years both at the primary and at the secondary level in Montreal, Canada. She has a Bachelor of Education, a Reading Diploma, a Special Education Diploma, a T.E.S.L. Certificate and is now completing a Masters in Curriculum at McGill University. Balanced literacy and providing equal access to reading for all children have been the driving passion behind the many years of teaching. Multiple intelligences, multi-sensory integration, differentiated instruction, cooperative learning and connecting sounds, print and cognition make up the background that colors the teaching style of this teacher, but in the foreground is her deep belief in the importance of the role of phonics in teaching reading and writing skills. She has said that the reason that she has been able to offer the gift of reading to many special needs children is because of her continued belief in phonics and the role it plays in becoming a reader.

**Shelly Osborne** has thirty-five years of teaching experience in elementary

classrooms. She received her B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley and an M.S. from the State University of New York, Oneonta. She holds a Reading Specialist Certificate from College of the Holy Names, Oakland, CA. and a CLAD Certificate from the state of California. She currently is a consultant in the area of language arts and a lecturer in reading at UC Berkeley Extension and John F. Kennedy University, Orinda, CA. She also supervises multiple subject student teachers. She truly believes in the teacher as life-long learner.

**Karen Pasquini** teaches small groups of students (grades K-6) for 40-minute periods twice a week, remediating below-average reading and math skills. Previously, she taught all subjects in grades 1, 4, 5 and 6 in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Florida, in inner-city, suburban, rural, international, northern US, and southern US schools. Her students' lessons are often featured in city newspapers. Karen won a West Virginia state-wide award in economics for a 6th-grade unit. Karen holds a B.S. degree, a master's of art in teaching, an elementary math specialist certificate, and a reading specialist certificate. Karen says, “I get to apply the research and writings of others.”

**Mary Rector** is a first grade instructor at Pleasantville Elementary in Pleasantville, Iowa. She earned her B.A. at Central College in Pella, Iowa. Mary was awarded an “Excellence In Education” award in November of 2002. Mary is a member of the Iowa Reading Association where she has served as a zone director. She currently chairs a creative writing contest for her local reading association. She is very involved with reading instruction and curriculum within her school system. She recently published an article on the [mirandanet.ac.uk](http://mirandanet.ac.uk) Internet site explaining her pen pal exchange program with a teacher from Great Britain.

**Patrick Riccards** is vice president of Widmeyer Communications in Washington, DC. He currently serves as senior counsel to the Partnership for Reading, a federal inter-agency effort designed to provide educators, parents, and community leaders with information on scientifically based reading research and its application in classroom instruction. Patrick was senior counsel to the National Reading Panel from 1998 to 2001. He earned his B.A. in government and communications from the University of Virginia, and currently serves as co-chairman of the Early Childhood

Education Committee for the Arlington (VA) School Board.

**Melissa Rust** is a reading specialist and reading intervention teacher at Walkersville Middle School. She earned a B.A. in psychology from Randolph-Macon College, her secondary English Certification from the University of Md., and her Master's in Reading and reading specialist certification from Hood College. She has taught pre-school to college age students. Mrs. Rust is particularly interested in learning how findings in brain research affect our understanding on how we teach reading.

**Wanda Ryan** is presently a Reading Teacher at Allen Elementary School in Houston, Texas. She earned a B.S. degree in Business from Texas Southern University and became a teacher through an Alternative Certification Program. Wanda has taught first and second grade and has devoted many hours to after-school reading intervention. The last two years, she has taught small group reading intervention for first, third and fourth grade students and next year will serve as Literacy Coach for her campus. Wanda's first love is teaching students to read and seeing their progress. This summer, she will attend a preparatory class for State Master Reading Certification.

**John Shefelbine**, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Teacher Education, California State University, Sacramento, where he teaches courses in language and literacy, assessment, and beginning reading. His scholarly interests have focused on how students learn word meanings from context, academic language development, frameworks for making decisions about reading instruction, and polysyllabic decoding strategies. John was a contributor to the California Reading Language Arts Framework, the California Reading Initiative, and the California Reading and Literature Project and has authored variety of reading materials and programs for developing fluent, confident readers.

**Jeanette Sleeper** is an elementary teacher at Fulda Elementary School, currently teaching all day everyday kindergarten. She earned her B.S. in elementary education and early childhood education from the Minnesota State University at Mankato. Her M.S. degree is in elementary education/gifted education from the State University at Mankato. She has taught for 32 years and is a part of the Best Practice reading network in the

state of Minnesota. She has presented teacher in-services many times throughout the state (reading best practice academies) on the importance of phonemic awareness and phonics in the process of learning to read. Jeanette loves to watch the children as they become readers - "It is wonderful to be the person who helps children open the door to the world of reading!"

**Grace Vyduna-Haskins**, now retired, taught for thirty-three years in McHenry County, Illinois. She earned her B.A. from Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, Illinois, and her M.Ed. and Ed.D. from National-Louis University in Evanston, Illinois. After receiving training in Orton-Gillingham methods of reading instruction, she researched using a multi-sensory approach to teach first grade reading for her master's project. Her doctoral dissertation investigated American reading-spelling relationships from 1607 to 1930. In addition to doing numerous presentations and publishing several articles on the topic of spelling/reading relationships, she is the author of *The Spel-Lang Tree*, a word study program for primary grades.

**Kendra Wagner** is an outspoken literacy activist, enthusiastic writer, and K-6 Title 1 reading specialist near Seattle. She also mentors and coaches teachers, and maintains a private practice in tutoring. Her first career, as a counselor/dance therapist, was a rebellion attempt, since her family was joyfully entrenched in education. She has taught primary grades in Chicago and K-8 teachers in California, facilitating staff development with the Consortium On Reading Excellence (CORE). Kendra has authored reading instruction materials and is a regular IRA and NCTE presenter. Kendra reports that when she is not reading research on the Stairmaster, she is opening rejection letters from journals, informing her that if only she had a PhD they would publish her. Kendra is a co-editor of *The Phonics Bulletin*.

**Kristi Yanta** is a New Product Manager at AGS Publishing in Circle Pines, Minnesota. She completed her graduate work (Ed.S.) in school psychology at the University of Wisconsin in River Falls and is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist. Kristi worked for three years in public schools before leaving the field to join the test development team at AGS. Her current projects include a new reading fluency measure and two test revisions.

Kristi has presented at the American Psychological Association convention and is an active member of several local and national professional organizations in the fields of school psychology and reading.

**Helen Zeitzoff** is a veteran teacher of 32 years in the Baltimore County School System and, most recently, was a tutorial instructor of first graders in phonetic skills. In the last 3 years Helen has authored the following books: *No Glamour Reading: Vowels*, *No Glamour Reading: Syllables*, *No Glamour Reading: Sight Words* (LinguiSystems) and *Phonics Rules!* (Remedia Publications). She is a demonstrated expert in the use of phonetic principles to teach the decoding of words. Ms. Zeitzoff holds a B.S. degree (Towson University) and Master's Degree Equivalency (Johns Hopkins University and Loyola College). In 1990 the Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce presented Ms. Zeitzoff with an Award in Excellence in Education. Helen Zeitzoff continues to write reading skill materials (future publications on the way) as she wants to provide students with the basic fundamentals of the decoding process.

### Who's Who Updates

Phonics SIG members should e-mail their 100-word Who's Who profile or update to [kendra9@mindspring.com](mailto:kendra9@mindspring.com)

### How to Join

If you are not yet a member of the IRA Phonics Special Interest Group and you wish to become one, please e-mail Rochelle Ireland-D'Ardenne Secretary of the Phonics Special Interest Group. Rochelle's e-mail address is:

[rireland@mail.mcps.org](mailto:rireland@mail.mcps.org)

Please provide your name and address where you receive your IRA publications, or your name and IRA membership number. An interest in phonics and current, paid-up membership in the International Reading Association are the only requirements for membership in the Phonics Special Interest Group. Phonics SIG membership is free.