

# Communication Link

Vol. 9 No. 1

Project Read

Fall/Winter 1997

## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- Finding Funds
- Researching Progress

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Deadline:  
February, 1998  
See insert for details

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*HERNANDO COUNTY, FL*

## *Senator Obtains \$300,000 For Project Read Staff Development*

For several years, I have been extremely concerned with the low reading scores of the children in my District. It has been a perplexing and ongoing problem and the education community never seemed to agree on a solution.

I believed that if we just "scanned" back to when children were learning to read, we could discover what we were doing then and not doing now. What I discovered was "phonics!" There used to be an emphasis on phonics and now, phonics was practically ignored. A teacher in Hernando County, knowing my interest in the subject, invited me to observe a reading program that they had been using in one of the grade schools which they found to be a great success. The reading scores were higher than in other schools in the county. Both the children and parents were pleased with the results.

To say the least, I was impressed with the program and I decided then and there that this should be available in all grade schools in the county. I also wanted to expand it to include students in the middle schools who are two years below grade level in reading skills. I asked, "What can I do to help?" The answer, of course, was money! So it became my mission to obtain appropriations in the state budget to fund "Project Read" in Hernando County. I was up against a great deal of opposition from the local school administration right up to the Department

of Education.

With determination and perseverance, I managed to secure funding in the amount of \$300,000.00. These funds are to be used to train teachers in this method of teaching so the program can be expanded. The wonderful part of Project Read is it required minimal funds to maintain once the teachers are trained. So I see this as a win-win for everyone.

However, my job is not over. I continue to monitor the distribution of the funds to ensure that they are used for my intended purpose. I am well aware of the temptation of some in the district administration, who did not support my efforts from the beginning, to divert some of the dollars to other less worthy projects.



*Ginny Brown-Waite  
Florida State Senator*



*Left, teacher Nancy L. Snyder  
with Hernando County students.*

**Contact Ginny Brown-Waite  
Tel. (352) 544-2344**

# *Ann Arbor School Describes Staff Development, Reports Student Progress*

by Donna Davison

## *Getting Started*

Mitchell Elementary School is a neighborhood school in the southeast quadrant of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Many of the students come from low S.E.S. and/or single-parent homes. Parent involvement in the school has traditionally been extremely low. Mitchell students have typically scored **among the lowest in the county on standardized achievement tests**. We can count on 65% of our first through third-graders needing Project Read as their primary form of reading instruction.

In the fall of 1990, I was asked to take a position at Mitchell as trainer and facilitator to help Project Read get off the ground. Shortly after I arrived, I met with the district's consultant's for language arts and researched who shared the understanding that money had been poured into this school for over 20 years with no change to show for it. Their message was, "Good luck, but don't expect much!" Teachers appeared to have much the same attitude with sentiments ranging from "No thanks—this just another in the long line of programs that come and go," to "All right I'll try it, but I won't count on much change." We got a slow, late, shaky start. Each first through third-grader began at unit one in Phonology and moved at different rates for the different age groups.

*"Our teaching has improved over time"*

To my great relief, only a few weeks after its beginning, a few teachers were excited about the positive results they were seeing. On many occasions I was snagged out of the hallway into their rooms to see this, answer that, explain how this is happening. Some teachers really dug into the approach, whether relying on their own growing skill as a Project Read teacher or my pulling students out. At the end of the first year, involved teachers were very pleased with the results they observed in their students.

## *Informing Parents*

We brought parents into the circle by teaching them the skills and vocabulary they would need to help their children in Project Read: speaking at P.T.O. meetings, inviting them to an in-school parent inservice, meeting them with their children at a nearby community clubhouse, and holding a Project Read fair where students walked parents through the skills at teach station with a teacher available for questions or guidance.

Parents became supportive and engaged. Where at typical P.T.O. meeting had been 4 – 6 participants, 35 people turned out to meet with a couple members of the Board of Education to encourage them to continue to fund the facilitator's position.

During the summer, a conversation at a neighborhood meeting focused on Project Read and the positive change which had been brought about in behavior of children—being carried beyond the school into the neighborhood! Hearing that we were losing funding for the Project Read facilitator position, the parents spent a year attempting to find outside funding for the project.

In 1991 and 1992 we dabbled in the comprehension and Written Expression strands of Project Read, but the greatest concentration of effort was placed in Phonology—the decoding process—in grades one through three. With multiple changes in staff assignments and new staff joining us each year, the program grew modestly. New teachers were trained. Most reluctant teacher remained that way. Teachers who had embraced the program from the beginning continued to grow in their expertise as multisensory teachers, encouraged by the growth they were seeing in their students.

### *Staff Coordinates K - 5 Project Read Program*

In 1993 we lost our funding for the facilitators position. More changes in staff assignments and new staff, as well as the complexity of Project Read itself, caused us to rally and find a way to fund the position half-time in the second semester. We focused on Phonology only in grades one through three.

In 1994 we coasted with interested teachers meeting weekly at lunch time to share questions and concerns. In 1995 extra funds from the district enabled us to relieve two teachers from their classrooms for one day each week to facilitate the development of Project Read. With the help of support staff and able teachers, the program continued to grow with continuity. They focus on fourth-grade Comprehension and Written Expression increased somewhat. ***This was the first year that every first through***

### ***third-grader had access to Project Read in the classroom.***

In 1996 I was released from the classroom for one more year of facilitating. Finally, we were a team—all teachers working in a whole-school initiative—each teacher learning to see his/her part in a K – 5 program. Project Read was taught in every classroom, first through fifth grade. We completed the Phonology strand in third grade, paving the way for this year's fourth graders to concentrate on Comprehension and Written Expression. Thorough day-by-day curriculum guides were written to help teachers grades 1 – 3 keep Project Read running smoothly with coordination between rooms and between grade levels. This includes a spelling program for all students, which is a natural outgrowth of the Phonology we teach. Sketchier guides were written for the fourth grade and fifth grade program as they are still developing.

#### Summary

We are proud of our accomplishments. We are truly a TEAM in this effort. We're glad we could share our data which supports our professional experiences. We have made a **huge** difference for Mitchell students. It isn't the same place it was **before** Project Read. Student success has increased, and this had contributed to improved self-esteem and behavior. A few years ago we couldn't hold novel discussions with our fourth and fifth-graders because the majority of them weren't reading well enough. Now we enjoy novel discussion, Battle of the Books, Junior Great Books, student newspapers, and the list continues to grow.

#### Margin Note:

*Editor's Note: This article covers only some of the research at Mitchell Elementary. For further information contact Donna Davison at 313-480-4452*

BLOOMINGTON, MN

## *Seminar Puts in Place Language Circle Consultant Service for Project Read Staff Development*



*Mary Lee Enfield, Ph.D., discusses evaluation of learner profiles and measurement of student achievement.*

**L**anguage Circle gathered Project Read trainers who might become consultants for a new service. The goal of the consultant service is to provide better prepared presenters and courses at more sites around the country. **Contact Language Circle (800) 450-0343.**



*Above, Tori Greene with the new Story Board Puzzle. Seminar participants learned the Phonology course content in preparation for teaching Language Circle sponsored courses. The new Story Form and Report Form Reading Comprehension videotapes were also highlighted. Left, Mary Davis guided participants in presentation protocol, especially aimed at helping consultants understand their audience.*



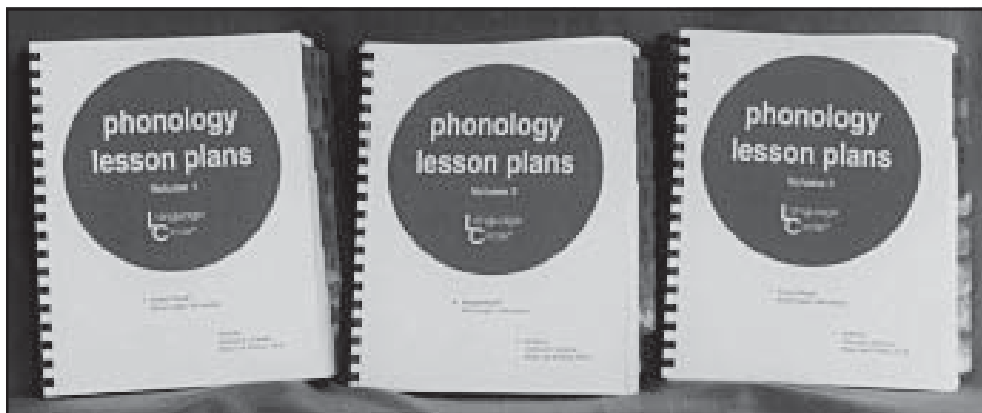
**NEW  
VIDEOTAPES!**

### *Videotapes for Reading Comprehension*

Tori Greene presents concepts, skills, and multisensory strategies for primary and intermediate students.

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- Story Form Comprehension Videotape (30 minutes) ..... \$69.00

## **NEW!** *Phonology Lesson Plans Provide Teachers with Detailed Lesson Plans*



**T**hree-volume set follows sequence of the red *Phonology Guide*. The new Lesson Plans contain detailed lessons describing teacher behavior, student participation for multisensory activities, student practice exercises, and reading material.

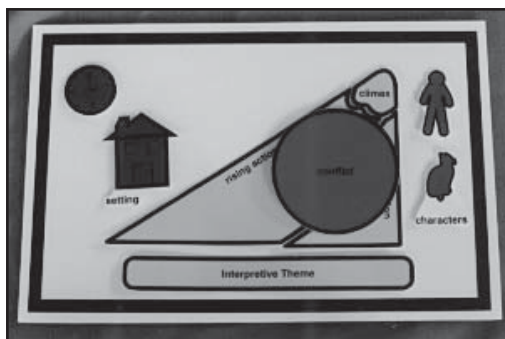
*Cost: \$125 per 3-volume set.*

## *Story Board Puzzles Improved*

**N**ew puzzles have a foam board backing. Laminated puzzle pieces adhere with Velcro. Some assembly is required. Tori Greene demonstrates the use of Story Board Puzzles in the new Story Form Reading Comprehension Videotape.



*Primary Story Puzzle  
with Transparency..... \$25*



*Intermediate Story Puzzle  
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## *Raskob*

*continued from page 1*

students who are studying to be educational therapists. Moreover, we believe that having Holy Names become a West Coast training center in Project Read would add to what we can offer and be an exciting addition to our services as well.

We look forward to building links with the Project Read group and as part of that, will be offering two programs here this summer of 1997, the Phonology training August 4 through 7 and the Written Expression training, August 11 through 14.

*Source: John M. Davis, Ph.D.,  
Director Raskob Learning  
Institute*

**Contact Language Circle  
for course brochure and  
registration information:  
1-800-450-0343.**

MORENO VALLEY, CA

## ***Project Read Teacher Staff Development Equated with Student's Reading Success***

*Many students across the grade levels are finding success for the first time in reading with the newly adopted training and use of the Project Read staff development program in the Moreno Valley Unified School District.*

The Moreno Valley Mentor Program and Special Education Program have implemented a program of training general education teachers, special education teachers and support staff in Project Read Strategies.

Ongoing training and support began this year after three teachers attended an intense four-day workshop during the summer of 1996 in Phonology, conducted by Tori Greene and Dr. Mary Lee Enfield, Ph.D. in Michigan. The district teachers, Sylvia Taylor, Resource Specialist; Judy Fuhrman, Language, Speech and Hearing Specialist and teacher of students with language disorders; and Andy Stetkevich, Program Specialist, attended the training. They immediately began implementing the program in three different educational settings. Mrs. Taylor uses the program in her Resource Specialist class with 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade students. Mrs. Fuhrman uses the program with

students in her 4th through 6th grade special day class. Mr. Stetkevich teaches the program in a general education 5th grade classroom. The different settings and educational backgrounds of the teachers has greatly enhanced the in-house training provided to district staff.

Over 120 elementary and secondary general education teachers, special education teachers, and instructional assistants have been trained this year by the Project Read Facilitators. Being able to provide ongoing support by having in-district facilitators has greatly enhanced the training program. Demonstration lessons with students participating in the program have become an integral and effective part of the training. Also, having available the Phonology Video provides teachers with access to reviewing techniques learned in training.

Teachers are completing the training saying this is the first time a practical, systematic method for teaching phonology within meaningful context has been presented to them. The beauty of Project Read is that students learn strategies that can be generalized throughout the core curriculum. The teachers now have a structured, multisensory methodology to reach those students who need this approach for learning to read.

***The establishment of Project Read in Moreno Valley also fulfills new state recommendations which indicate the explicit teaching of phonics shall be part of a balanced literacy program.***

It is proving to be a wonderful compliment to the current language arts training provided to district teachers as part of recent legislation. Teachers who attended the Phonology classes are already asking when the district will offer the next strand of Project Read in the area of comprehension. One elementary school, Honey Hollow, has adopted the program school wide



*Project Read Facilitators, left to right:  
Judy Fuhrman, Andy Stetkevich and Sylvia Taylor.*

## Scenes from Moreno Valley Staff Development

for students needing this instructional approach.

Yet, the most exciting element of Project Read is seeing the significant gains students are making in reading. Teachers across the district who are implementing the program are saying that students previously classified as nonreaders are reading for the first time with the use of Project Read methodology. Students who thought they just did not have the ability to learn to read are now experiencing the joys of reading for the first time and have the realization that they are successful learners.

**Contact: Andy Stetkevich,  
Program Specialist,  
Tel. (909) 485-5600**



*“The most exciting element of Project Read is seeing the significant gains students are making in reading.”*



*Teachers practice skywriting with Sylvia Taylor.*

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## 1997 Schedule

### *Project Read/Language Circle Courses*

June 2 – 4	Lubbock, TX, <i>Written Expression</i> (Closed Session)
June 5 – 6	Lubbock, TX, <i>Story Form</i> (Closed Session)
June 10 – 13	San Marcos, TX, <i>Reading Comprehension</i> (Closed Session)
July 15 – 18	Greenville, SC, <i>Phonology</i> (Closed Session)
July 21 – 23	Traverse City, MI, <i>Phonology</i> , Jim Williams (616) 922-6228
July 24 – 25	Traverse City, MI, <i>Written Expression</i> , Jim Williams (616) 922-6228
August 4 – 7	New Jersey ODS, <i>Phonology</i> , Pat Nieswand (908) 879-0466
August 4 – 7	Oakland, CA, <i>Phonology</i> , Liz Sund (800) 450-0343
August 11 – 14	Williston, VT, <i>Written Expression</i> , Cathy Anderson (802) 482-3885
August 11 – 14	Oakland, CA, <i>Written Expression</i> , Liz Sund (800) 450-0343
August 19 – 21	Bloomington, MN, <i>Phonology</i> , Liz Sund (800) 450-0343
September 25 – 27	San Marcos, TX, <i>Linguistics</i> (Closed Session)
September 29 – October 1	Lubbock, TX, <i>Linguistics</i> , Julie Duncan (806) 766-1053
October 15 – 17	Boston, MA, <i>Report Form</i> , Joanne Reeves (617) 837-3697
October 20 – 21	Boston, MA, <i>Primary Comprehension</i> , Joanne Reeves (617) 837-3697

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