

# Communication Link

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Enterprises, Inc.

Vol. 10 No. 1

Project Read

Fall 1998

PLACENTIA, CA

## *Administrators and Teachers Attend Project Read Summer Courses*



*Front table, left to right: Teri Cranford, Kelly Travassaros, Pauline Ferris, Claudia Wright  
Back table, left to right: Carol Carson, Jolene Fredstrom, Caroline Davenport*



*Front table, left to right: Lizette Collier, Ann O'Rourke, Rubin White  
Back table, left to right: Carol Kesmani, Wendy Humphries, Elaine Doke, Donna Shaffer, Karen Gundel, Terry Hanna*

The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District embarked on a comprehensive reading/language arts adoption during the 1997-98 school year. Following a lengthy adoption process, the recommendation from staff to the Board of Education was to adopt one of the piloted textbook series and to have a supplementary adoption of Project Read Phonology. This ensured that the district adopted a systematic phonics program, as directed by the California Reading Initiative.

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LUBBOCK, TX



*Susan Bacon directly teaches sentence structure using Project Read Written Expression curriculum and strategies.*

## ***Hunt Elementary Students Build Foundation in First Year of Project Read.***

**H**unt Elementary School, in Lubbock, Texas, is home to 220 students, most of whom are from a low socio-economic background. Our school is comprised of 78% African American, 20% Hispanic, and 2% Caucasian, with a fairly high transient rate. Hunt teachers feel we are one of the hardest-working schools in our district, as most of our efforts go toward not being recognized as low performing by the State of Texas. This rating is determined by our reading, math, and writing scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (T.A.A.S.) given annually toward the end of the school year.

If the profile of Hunt Elementary appears bleak, it is not. Like other schools, we have many highly-gifted students. Like other teachers, we strive to reach and motivate those students who struggle academically. As a fifth and sixth-grade teacher, I had become desperate for a strong, foundational reading program. In my classroom many children were reading on a second or third-grade level. Some were reading at seventh- and eighth-grade levels. I had no idea how to base reading instruction in a way that would address all of their needs. There was also great pressure to raise the T.A.A.S. reading scores. But how? I spent countless hours trying to design a curriculum that would reach at least some of the children. I was teaching

test-taking strategies which were obviously not working according to our T.A.A.S. scores. Something had to change.

In February, 1997, our intermediate staff (grades 4-6) agreed to commit to the Project Read program. Other districts who had adopted Project Read in the past ten years had some very impressive T.A.A.S. score results, and our school was demographically comparable to many of the schools in these districts. We believed that in time we could achieve similar results. Another teacher from Hunt Elementary and I were trained in four of the strands of Project Read that spring and summer. He and I then conducted in-house staff development presentations throughout the year on Story Form and Report Form. As the sixth-grade language arts teacher, I also incorporated Written Expression with my curriculum, sharing ideas and materials with other teachers. Without a facilitator, all three grade levels worked as a team to observe each other in the classroom, provide input, and to share our successes and problems.

In setting my goals and expectations for the school year, I decided not to teach any T.A.A.S. test-taking strategies until spring. This seemed to me a huge risk, but since I had taught these same students the year before in

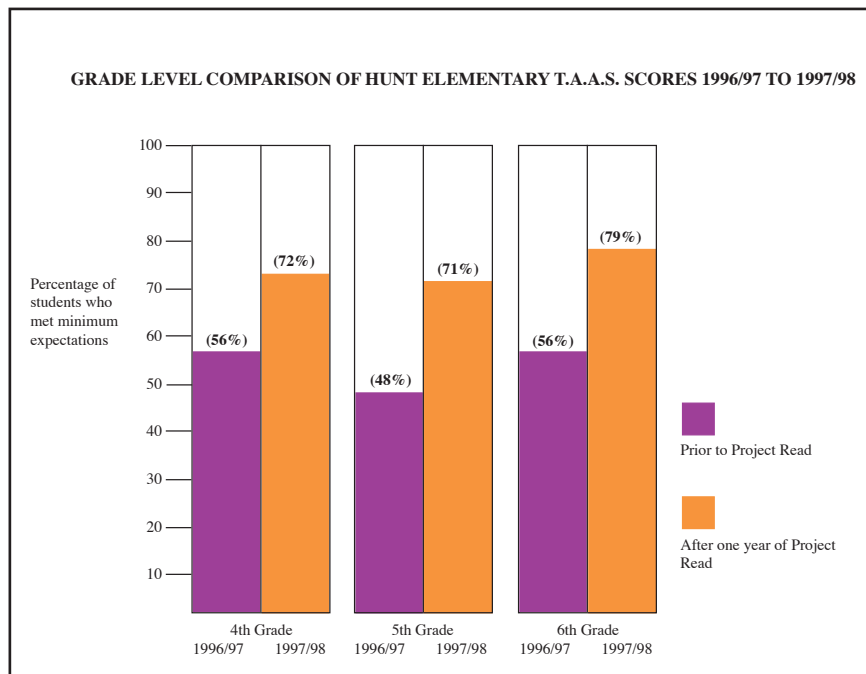
fifth grade and only 48% of them had passed the reading portion that year, I felt we had to take this risk. My principal obviously agreed and supported my plan. What I didn't fully realize at the time was that I would be indirectly teaching the T.A.A.S. objectives by directly teaching Project Read! The most remarkable difference was that the students were becoming attentive readers. Their reading levels were improving and they were understanding the dynamics of reading like never before.

On the first day of the school year, we began learning about the elements of Story Form and Written Expression. Later that Fall we concentrated in Report Form. We found settings, became experts at recognizing climaxes, argued about why someone was the protagonist and what his *real* problem might be. We pulled details out of paragraphs and learned how they were all tied to one main idea. Writing became a game to the students, as they created their own predicate expanders and discovered how to place parts of speech in different places within the sentence. Things were happening in sixth-grade reading class. Students were understanding how language worked and becoming careful readers. A strong foundation was being formed due to the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches of Project Read.

In January I began to focus more on the upcoming T.A.A.S. I was surprised that there was so much carry-over from the Project Read foundation to the T.A.A.S. reading objectives. Every one of the six T.A.A.S. objectives was something we had already covered in Story and Report Form: word meaning, facts and details, main idea and summarization, author's viewpoint, etc. A little transition in the terminology was necessary, but teaching the students about the objectives was easier than ever before, thanks to all the groundwork we had laid in the first semester of school. Even some of my most limited readers were focused and producing passing scores on the practice tests they turned in. Project Read is clearly the reason for the students' growth.

As seen in the comparison graph of our fourth, fifth, and sixth graders' T.A.A.S. reading scores from 1996/97 to 1997/98, it is obvious that we were out of the danger zone of the *low performance* rating from the state this year. (My sixth graders improved their scores by 31 points from last year). We expect even more growth in 1999. After all, this was just our first year with Project Read and achieving better T.A.A.S. results was initially why we chose this program!

The emphasis on the test, however, now pales to the growth that occurred every day in my classroom last year. My children were not nonreaders. The instruction they were receiving before Project Read was just not reaching many of them. The Project Read foundation has made all the difference. This program allows all students a firm basis from which to grow as readers.



**Contact:**  
**Susan Bacon is currently a reading specialist in Colorado Springs, CO**  
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# Application and Transfer Manual is Important New Addition to Written Expression Kit

**WRITTEN EXPRESSION KIT**  
*All the materials you need to teach Written Expression in the classroom.*

- Framing Your Thoughts Guide
- New! Framing Your Thoughts Application and Transfer Manual
- Writing Symbol Pack
- Sentence Builders **\$175.00**



**Framing Your Thoughts Guide \$55.00**  
*A teacher's text to teach the foundational concepts and skills of written language. The emphasis is on understanding the function of words in the sentence.*

**New! Framing Your Thoughts Application and Transfer Manual \$75.00**

- Detailed teaching lessons
- Student Practice Sheets to extend skill lessons
- Major emphasis on paragraph development

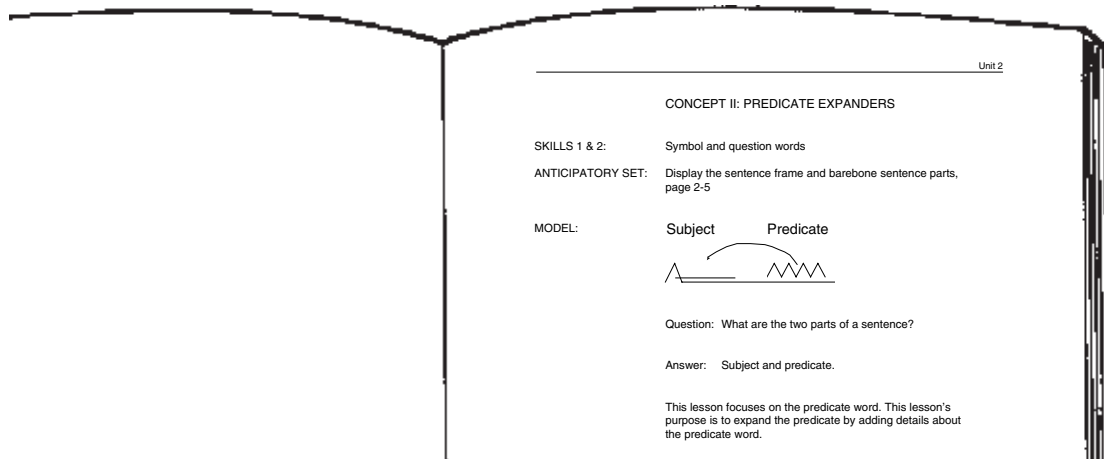


**Sentence Builders 10 folders \$30.00**  
*Students manipulate symbols to build and diagram sentence parts.*

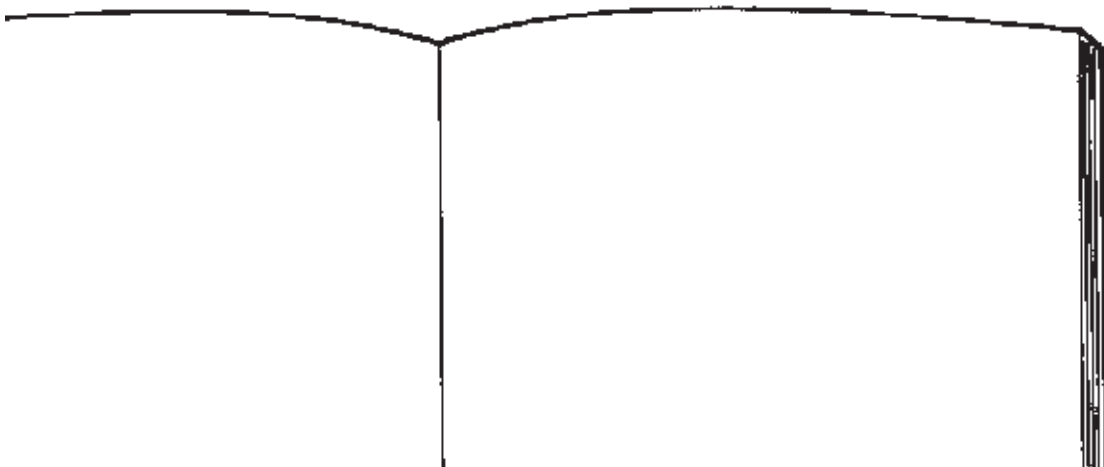
**Writing Symbol Pack \$15.00**  
*Large enough for use in pocket chart.*

The new Framing Your Thoughts Application and Transfer Manual extends the skill learning of Framing Your Thoughts to application of skills using Student Practice Sheets and transfers learning to paragraph writing. There is major focus on developing five types of paragraphs:

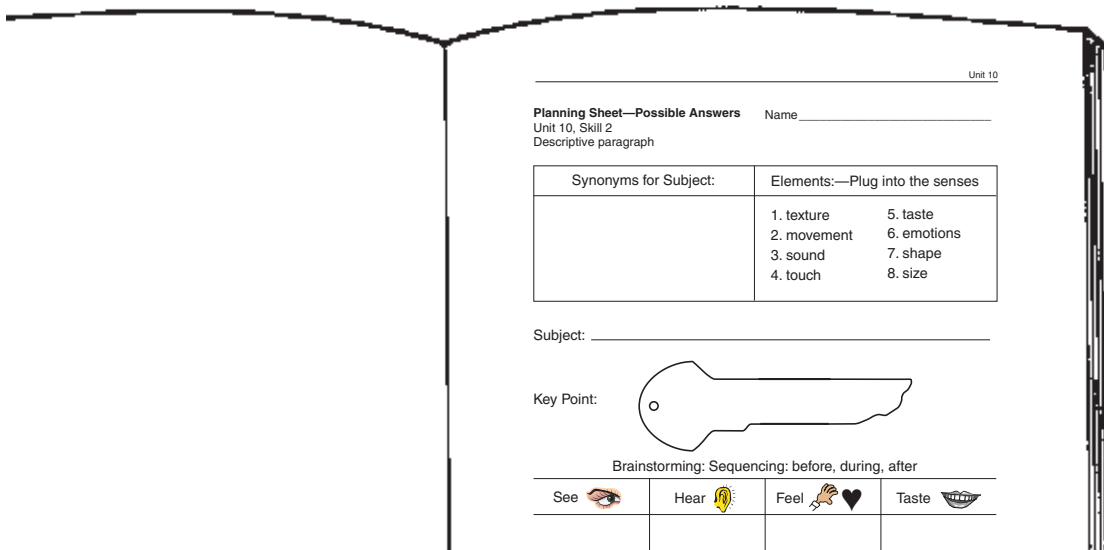
- procedural
- compare and contrast
- persuasive
- informative
- descriptive



*Detailed teaching plans extend skill lessons.*



*Student Practice Sheets apply writing skills, diagramming, and editing.*



*Major focus—developing paragraphs as meaningful transfer of writing skills.*

LAKE CHARLES, LA

## Louisiana K-3 Reading and Math Initiative Funds Project Read Training

During the Spring of 1997, the Louisiana State Legislature allocated \$30 million dollars to the Department of Education for the purpose of developing a balanced and comprehensive approach to improve the reading and mathematics performance of at-risk students in kindergarten through third grade. This initiative, known throughout the state of Louisiana the K-3 Reading and Math Initiative, had to focus on prevention and intervention. Each parish in Louisiana received funding based upon the number of children in K through 3 in their parish.

Calcasieu Parish, located in the southwestern corner of Louisiana and close to the Texas border, received \$1.2 million dollars towards the K-3 Reading and Math Initiative. Project Read was the major focus of the Calcasieu K-3 Initiative. Every teacher in grades 1, 2, and 3 received four days of training in the Phonology Strand of Project Read. Ms. Cherie Didier spent a total of 16 days in Calcasieu Parish training the teachers. Following the training, teachers began using Project Read within the regular classroom with small groups of children for 30 minutes each day. Not only were the teachers trained in the Project Read Phonology Strand, but also the Elementary Curriculum & Instruction staff. Each elementary principal received training by the C & I staff on the Project Read strategies that their teachers would be using. The elementary Title 1 tutors received training on the Project Read strategies.

Project Read is being used by every regular education teacher within the classroom in grades 1, 2, and 3. Teachers have been excited, nervous and a little "scared" during the first year using Project Read. They

have also been eager to share their ideas, concerns, and success stories. Many teachers shared, "Project Read helped to build self-esteem and helped my students succeed," "Positive feedback from parents, even a letter from a mother commenting on her child's improvement and interest in reading," and yet another teacher shared, "I heard one of my Project Read kids singing as she went out to recess, 'Every word has to have a vowel.'"

Project Read and the teachers of Calcasieu Parish are making a difference in the lives of children in Southwest Louisiana.



*Project Read Training—Spring 1998*  
*Above, third grade teachers*  
*Jobna Rion and Bobbie Moon.*



**Contact:**  
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PLACENTIA, CA

## Placentia-Yorba Linda District Designs Project Read Implementation

### Why Project Read?

As an adopted program, all kindergarten through second grade students in the district will participate in **Project Read Phonology**. Students who need a directly-taught, multisensory approach will participate in the entire *Project Read* program in the sequence prescribed by the program. Students who do not need all of the activities/approaches will use the Harcourt-Brace *Signatures* program, supplemented by *Project Read Phonology* strategies. In this way, all students will receive instruction in the Phonology Curriculum coupled with multisensory strategies and vernacular paced at their correct level of instruction.

### Training Staff

To ensure that the program is implemented completely, all district K-2 teachers must have had *Project Read Phonology* training. K-2 teachers had the option of attending *Project Read Phonology* training in the district on August 31<sup>st</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup>. The response was overwhelming with over 190 teachers coming back from their summer vacations two days early to learn or refresh their *Project Read Phonology* skills from three excellent consultants. Teachers were enthusiastic! One of the participants wrote to thank the district for providing “by far the best inservice I have attended since I began teaching... over twenty years ago.”

### Supporting Project Read Training with Coaches

As part of the implementation design, each of the district’s 19 elementary schools has a designated *Project Read Phonology Coach*. In preparation for their new roles as *Project Read Phonology Coaches*, twenty-five teachers and administrators participated in four days of *Phonology* training this past July in Ontario, California. The coaches will provide on-site support for teachers and will attend monthly district-wide coaches’ meetings to share ideas and concerns. Site *Harcourt-Brace* coaches will also attend the meetings so that the two programs will work in concert.

### Enthusiasm High

Although there are many new pieces to our language arts program this year, the level of enthusiasm among the district’s elementary teachers is high because teachers feel that they have excellent tools and that they are very prepared to provide an outstanding language arts program to students.

### Contact:

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*Communication Link* is published semiannually in Fall and Spring issues.

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## 1999 Schedule

### Project Read/Language Circle Courses

For complete schedule, Tel: 800-450-0343

From coast to coast Project Read is in demand due to state and local education needs for improved scores in reading, comprehension, and writing competency. Language Circle consultants are available for staff development in your area.

*Project Read developers Mary Lee Enfield, Ph.D. and Tori Greene pose in back row (at left) with Clarksburg, MA teachers and students who were honored in the Spring 1998 issue of "Communication Link" for their use of Project Read Written Expression curriculum.*



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