

Reading Educators Guild



By Dr. Barbara Clark

The Reading Department and California State University, Fullerton, is undergoing some exciting changes. The transformation process evolved last year when Dr. Ashley Bishop, Dean of the College of Education, issued a challenge to the department. Given unlimited resources, he asked, what would you envision as a comprehensive, inclusive Literacy Center? Imagine what such a center might look like, who it might serve and what types of services would be provided?

Our vision underwent many transformations as we explored the needs of Orange County, services our department currently provides and possible program design. What eventually emerged was the idea of a Community Learning, Literacy and Resource Center. At first, the focus involved establishing a permanent facility at our El Toro campus. We also visualized some type of expansion of our Read 581 clinical experience as well as increased community outreach activities. However, as we began gaining clarity on the project, we made some significant discoveries in the conceptualizing process: we weren't planning a new project; our reading clinic had already begun to transform into a Reading Center. Our goal, then, was not to implement an innovation, but to enhance an already highly successful literacy program we named The CSUF Reading Center.



The Reading Center

The Center provides a variety of reading services to meet the needs of educators, parents, the community and our graduate students. The Center provides tutorial support services for struggling readers, family education and professional development. We also have a highly successful remedial reading program that provides hands-on, clinical experiences (Read 581) for our

masters candidates. One Instructional Learning Center is located on the Fullerton Campus, the other in partnership with Principal Jayne Martin at Viejo Elementary School in the Capistrano School District.

The clinical experience is more than a culminating course for the Reading Program; it is our department's tangible evidence of success. Our program graduates have been taking coursework, learning to build successful readers, obtaining the necessary tools to be literacy leaders. In the clinic setting, our graduate students get to actually apply their skills, knowledge and expertise in a way that demonstrates they are, indeed, expert craftspeople-- masters in the field of education, and specialists when it comes to learning and literacy.

Program Evaluation



Evaluation Design and Data Collection

During the fall, 2003-spring 2004 school year, a program evaluation was conducted to determine the extent of our success. One underlying assumption was that our graduate students' success with remedial readers was a good indicator of our Reading Program's success. Surveys, interviews and observations were utilized to determine the degree to which our graduate students obtained goals for readers; clients' perception of the program; parents/caregivers' perception of the program and level of support for expansion.

The evaluation also sought to determine what factors might influence differences in outcomes between the Fullerton and the South Orange County sites. Similarities included teacher training, remediation process, materials and the same director at both sites. Differences included family socio economic status, a wide range of reading disabilities, and graduate students' teaching experience. Despite the differences, the outcomes on both sites were virtually identical.

Findings

Goal Attainment: There was an extremely high degree of goal attainment set by graduate students for their remedial readers. In the area of phonemic awareness, 100% of the goals were achieved, with vocabulary achievement at 98%, decoding 96% and comprehension in the 90% range. One especially important goal achievement was in the affective area, where 98% of goals set were met or exceeded. Typically, clients begin the remediation program with a lack of confidence and general disinterest or dislike of reading. Teachers' goals centered on changing negative attitudes towards reading and building confidence by providing positive experiences that promoted success and fostered confidence.



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Student Perception of Program: Overall, remedial readers reported having a favorable, extremely positive impression about their reading experiences, showed considerable change in negative attitudes about reading and perceived significant benefits of their improved reading abilities. There were numerous positive comments from the struggling readers, but no negative comments reported. Typical comments included, "I like coming here!" "It was a very helpful and fun place," "I love it here" and "I think it is really fun and cool because people teach you how to read and you learn more stuff than you already knew."



Perhaps the most significant benefit for clients was the personal rewards gained by being in the program. One frequent benefit was related in the comment, "I'm doing better in school now". A middle school student bragged how his reading had gone from a D to a C, then a B and finally an A. He and his parents attributed this success to the child's participation in the program. One student summed up his newly enhanced ability to read better by stating, "It makes me happier".

Parent satisfaction

While we typically experienced very positive responses from parents on a daily basis, what we found from our survey was somewhat overwhelming, especially the positive comments. Parents/caregivers satisfaction was 100% in their belief that the program significantly enhanced their students' reading achievement, the experience was extremely beneficial and their student enjoyed the program. Many comments reflected the sentiment expressed by one parent, "This has been such an excellent experience, he feels he can read and has more confidence." Other comments included, "My child's grades have improved", "My child has demonstrated interest in reading since he has been attending."

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Every parent surveyed said they would recommend the program to others, "I would recommend this reading clinic to everyone. Without this exceptional program, we know our daughter would not have done as well as she has this year." Said another, "I really appreciated the teachers and this wonderful program."

Conclusion

The CSUF Reading Programs has enjoyed a great deal of success on many levels. The new Reading Center concept was an outgrowth of effective teaching, community outreach and student satisfaction. The next step is to identify additional resources and generate more ideas as we move into the development phase of the Learning, Resource and Research Center. Dr. Carter-Wells and I are in the process of developing a white paper with a 14 member community group which we have envisioned as including representatives from various campus departments including and beyond the College of Education, non-profit agencies, business and industry groups, KOCE, CASA, Advancement board member Dr. Debbie Hancock, El Toro campus, and CSUF Public Affairs. Funds have been requested for a market analysis of community needs.

The scope and breadth of such a center is limited only by our imaginations. We invited guests at the recent REG dinner to imagine along with us. The ideas from that meeting are being utilized to help drive the overall vision. If you have ideas for our comprehensive center, please pass them along to Dr. JoAnn Carter-Wells, Chair, Reading Department.

Faculty Footnotes

The College of Education hosted its first Advisory Board meeting in March. **Dean Ash Bishop** presided over the meeting attended by representatives from each of the departments. **Chair JoAnn Carter-Wells** and **Kathi Bartle Angus** represented the Reading Department. Conversations were begun exploring how the College of Education can best serve the needs of Orange County. Advisory Board members who are Reading Alumni include **Laura Schwalm**, Superintendent, Garden Grove U. S. D. and **Juan Vasquez**, President, Santiago Canyon Community College. (See complete list on p. 5)

The REG Dinner in March provided an opportunity to present this year's scholarship recipients with their awards. The following students received scholarships:

Terry Monjarez – REG Scholarship
Robin Barry – Jean Carolyn Brenneman Scholarship
Judy Serrano – Lewis and Deborah Hancock Scholarship
Patricia Alcocer – Dorothy C. Klausner Scholarship

Reading Educator's Guild Grant REG Grant Opportunity

REG will again fund the Reading Educator's Guild Grant, established in 2004 to provide financial support for classroom or academic materials to an REG member. This non-repayable grant is intended to be an adjunct to a typical classroom or professional materials budget.

An applicant must submit a typed request for funding on the official form. Applications are available on our website at :

www.readingeducatorsguild.org

The request must include a budget that does not exceed \$300.

A committee of the current REG board will make all decisions as to whom and for what funds will be granted. All decisions will be final. The award recipient will purchase the requested materials and turn in the receipts for complete funding. All materials purchased through this grant become the property of the recipient.

Criteria:

- Must be an REG Member.
- Funds must be used for classroom books and professional materials only.
- A maximum of \$300 is awarded each year.

All applications must be submitted to Kathi Bartle-Angus by May 1, 2005 to be considered for this year. Last year's recipient was Leslee Milch. She used the funds to extend her library outreach program.

Faculty Footnotes (cont.)

Plans are underway for the first College of Education Commencement Ceremony on May 28. Students in this year's graduating class will be the first to have College of Education listed on their diplomas. REG will host a reception for the graduates immediately following the ceremony on the second floor patio of the Education Classroom building. REG members are welcome to attend. If you are interested in helping or attending please contact **Jan Bagwell**

*We are looking for someone to serve as Hospitality Coordinator for REG. If you are interested in this position please contact Jan Bagwell.
(jbagwell@saddleback.edu)*

Alumni News

Congratulations to **Michelle Skidmore** (2003, Capo cohort) on her selection as Teacher of the Year for Capistrano Unified School District. Michelle teaches fourth grade for CUSD and is also teaching a section of Read 508 for us this semester.

Congratulations also to Nathan Paul Gibbs (2004) on the publication of his book, "*The Betrayal of Man – Water: A book of what is and what will be.*". The book was both written and illustrated by Nathan. His art for the book was subsequently featured at Art Walk in Laguna Beach and was for sale as a fundraiser for the Surfrider Foundation. For more information on Nathan's work check out his website:

www.defineart.com

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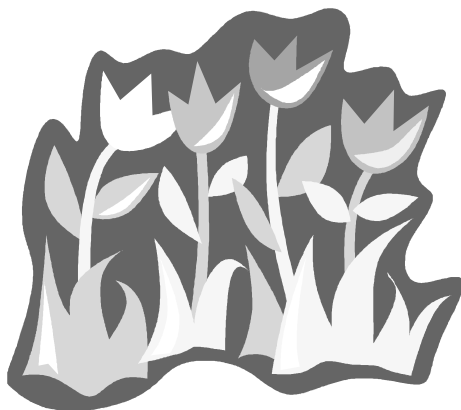
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Reading Educators Guild
California State University
PO Box 6868
Fullerton, CA 92834-6868



SPRING 2005 ISSUE

Items of Interest for REG Newsletter???

We would welcome your submissions to the newsletter. Please send your article via email to lovettc.gc@verizon.net. Please type "REG" on the subject line of your email.

Thanks, we'd love to hear from you!

Gena Lovett, Editor

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