




Research Based-Personal Explanation

A successful program that meets the goal of helping ALL children learn to read by the end of second grade needs to be based on the most current research and best practices for teaching reading, writing, and spelling to dyslexic and non-dyslexic learners. Phonetic Reading with Silent Elephant "e", A Phonetic Reading Program for ALL Learners of Any Age, Particularly Dyslexic and Struggling Readers is based on the most current research in reading acquisition.

A very strong belief that ALL learners CAN learn to read, including dyslexic learners, led me to Dr. Sally Shaywitz. My experience raising my dyslexic daughter heightened my desire to understand dyslexia and teaching dyslexic learners.

Dr. Sally Shaywitz's book Overcoming Dyslexia was the first book to present fMRI evidence of brains of dyslexics that worked differently when reading than non-dyslexic brains. This physical evidence in the brain of dyslexics using fMRI's revolutionized the study of dyslexia. Her book presents her research into the brain of a dyslexic describing what is dyslexia, how to identify dyslexia and how to use specific tools to help educate dyslexic people. She has written many articles on dyslexia including "Dyslexia: An Article" and "A New and Complete Science-Based Reading Program for Reading Problems at Any Level". Dr. Sally E. Shaywitz is the Co-Director of the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity along with her husband Dr. Bennett Shaywitz.

Continuing to build on this foundation, I received personalized instruction from an Orton-Gillingham instructor, Sylvia Griffin. For many years Sylvia and I taught together, as she was a reading specialist at my school. The Orton-Gillingham approach to reading instruction is intended to be used with persons having difficulty with reading, writing, and spelling. Often times these people have dyslexia. Dr. Samuel T. Orton and Anna Gillingham developed the one-on-one teacher-student instructional model in the 1930's. It is an excellent direct and systematic approach to the teaching and learning of language arts.




My participation in Lindamood Bell's workshops introduced me to The Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program for Reading, Spelling, and Speech by Patricia C. Lindamood and Phyllis D. Lindamood. Their program is an excellent reference book to guide classroom teachers and speech therapists to kinesthetically teach the individual sounds of letters that make the phonemes in our language. Children will develop cognitive awareness of the kinesiology involved in speech acquisition when seeing and feeling the movements of their lips, tongue and mouth in relation to making and hearing each individual phoneme. Patricia and Phyllis Lindamood's excellent "respond-to-the-response" manner of teaching is designed for use during one-on-one tutoring. Lindamood Bell's detailed research and application of her research is extremely useful for struggling readers, writers, and spellers in the classroom or in a one-on-one setting.

My situation was different from theirs. I was teaching in a low socio-economic school with a high population of ELL students. I had to develop a program, using information gleaned from their methods and my personal experiences, to use in my classroom: a program that could be used in whole group settings, in small group settings and in one-on-one settings. Further, it had to be a program that was easy to use allowing a classroom teacher to comfortably hand a thorough and complete lesson plan to a colleague, a substitute, an aide, a parent helper, and/or a student teacher and know that they would successfully teach the lesson using the same content and vocabulary as the teacher. The teacher would be able to relax knowing that students are getting exactly what they need in precisely the way she/he would have taught the lesson.

Utilizing Ortin-Gillingham's and Lindamood Bell's research, my teaching and my program evolved encompassing more kinesthetic techniques ensuring I was always teaching the 'whole child'.

Included in my research, is best practices for teaching reading, which, of course, emphasizes phonemic awareness as the foundation of all reading. Research has proven that acquired phonemic awareness skill in Kindergarteners is the *best* predictor of their future success in reading. "For those children who are deficient in phonological awareness skills, their improvement in reading is linked directly to instructional methods that include explicit teaching of these skills as part of a comprehensive reading program." *Statement of Dr. Reid Lyon, Chief Child Development and Behavior Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, United States House of Representatives, July 27, 1999.



Then my own success and experience with phonics instruction, both in my classroom and with my daughter, led me to the research of Louisa Cook Moats. Speech to Print, Language Essentials for Teachers by Louisa Cook Moats is the best book I have found for exemplifying the power of teaching reading phonetically and teaching the morphology of our language. Louisa Cook Moats has done extensive research in the language learning processes that developing readers, writers, and spellers use to become competent readers, writers, and spellers. Her work offers excellent guidance and examples for teachers to use in teaching literacy. When I first read her book, I thought to myself, "Someone who has done significant research agrees with me. Phonics is the best way to teach reading."

Pleasant T. Rowland, who established the Rowland Reading Foundation in 2003, was quoted in the winter edition 2012 of the International Dyslexic Association journal *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*. Pleasant Rowland echoes the need for phonics for all learners. In her article entitled "Teaching ALL Children to Read, the Challenge of Our Times", Rowland, notes that phonics works for teaching ALL children to read by the end of second grade. She asked in her article if the IDA could help the other struggling readers not just the dyslexic ones.

This is the basis of my reading program Phonetic Reading with Silent Elephant "e", A Phonetic Reading Program for ALL Learners of Any Age Particularly Dyslexic or Struggling Readers. *ALL children will be reading by the end of second grade!*

Armed with research, best practices, and my own experience with my dyslexic daughter and teaching in low economic public schools, I developed Silent Elephant "e" to ensure that ALL children are happily reading by the end of second grade. Students taught using Silent Elephant "e" learn to read by engaging all of their senses and their whole body. They are bursting with enthusiasm along their journey to lifelong learning!

When presenting Silent Elephant "e", I weave my past and continuing research into every part of my presentation, as it is important to me that my audience 1) understands that dyslexia is a real thing, 2) understands there are proven best practices for teaching All learners, 3) understands that ALL learners CAN learn to read if you teach them the way they learn, and 4) understands that learning to read is a whole body experience that is FUN!