

HEC Reading Horizons Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 4: Winter 2002

Inside this Issue:

- Press Release
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Customer Service
- Advisory Council
- See what others have to say about Reading Horizons

Discover Intensive Phonics spells success for students at Underwood Public School!

Since adopting the Discover Intensive Phonics Reading program in 1998 the reading test scores for Underwood Public Schools have been the highest in the state of Minnesota three out of the last four years. In the first year 98% of 8th graders passed the Basic Skills Test needed for graduation. In both the 1999-2000 and 2001-2002 school years, 100% of 8th graders passed. The state average of passing 8th graders was 80% in 1999-2000 and 79% in 2001-2002.

In 3rd and 5th grades the raw scores for reading on the State Comprehensive Test were 1547 and 1622 respectively where the state averages were 1490 and 1557.

John Hamann, Principal at Underwood School states, " We all realize that reading and writing usually go hand-in-hand, and due to the fact that we do so well in reading, it is no surprise that our passing percent in writing at the 10th grade level is 97% this year."

He goes on to say, "The Underwood students did not always score this well. In 1997-98, the 8th grade scores in reading were at 78% and the state average was at 68%. Even though we were above the state average, we were not where we wanted to be. I'm glad we made the decision to implement Discover Intensive Phonics and Reading Horizons software. I am so very pleased with your product that I cannot keep from smiling every time I review our scores! Due to your excellent curriculum our scores are tops in the state at every level."

Over the past 35 years thousands of schools all across the country have experienced similar success through the use of the Discover Intensive Phonics system. If you are interested in receiving a research packet that highlights a few additional cases please contact us at info@readinghorizons.com. We also invite you to check out our website at www.readinghorizons.com where you can access current research and testimonials.

The Word On The Street

"Recently, Rick, a 48-year old student with a grade three reading level, started at our school. He wanted to work mainly on his language skills as he said that his spelling was terrible. Once he got started on Reading Horizons he didn't want to stop. Usually our students will stay on the computer for around an hour a day, but he opted to stay working with the program for the whole day. Many times he even kept working after class time. He was excited about what he was learning. He said things like, "I never knew there was such a thing as vowels. I never knew there were long vowel sounds. I never knew there were syllables." He finished the program the first time in four days, and then he started at the beginning and went right through it again. He has now finished the whole program a second time and has joined our class for reading and writing. He continues to rave about how language makes sense now and how spelling is so much easier.

He has gone up two grades in his reading and he has only been with us for two weeks. It is wonderful when a tool works so well for a person. I feel his is quite an amazing story."

Lynn Haugen
Principal/Instructor
The Chiron Learning Centre

I have used HEC Discover Intensive Phonics for seven years in a computer lab setting. It has been an excellent tool to individualize phonics instruction for emerging readers. First graders can really grasp the association between seeing combinations of letters and putting the sounds that they represent together to form words. Each student can go at his or her own pace with the computer software without having to wait on other students who don't catch on as quickly or are struggling to keep up with skills they're not ready for. In second grade, I can choose to have them review a few lessons or just continue from where they left off. The reports that can be printed are very helpful in communicating with the classroom teacher exactly where each student is with independent phonetic development. The classroom activities allow teachers to see that information as well, but the printed reports can be a more concrete aid to explain this development to parents. The format from which the students select their lessons is also a very visual way for them to see their own progress. They become excited and want the students around them to see many of the interesting things they come across in the lessons as well as how many lessons they have completed successfully. I have very few problems with keeping children on task, and it is wonderful to see their smiling faces when they realize how much they have accomplished.

June Thomas
Central Elementary School
Dubberly, LA

I absolutely love the Intensive Phonics program. I've been a teacher for 27 years in first through fourth grades, and I've never used a better phonics program. It is simple in content and easy to use by students and teacher alike. I especially like its chalkboard method. Also, it can be adapted to any grade level easily with one or two syllable words. Students definitely enjoy it more than any other program I've encountered. I believe this program is a must for Kindergarten through Fourth grade!

Treca Smith
Clark Elementary Teacher

Frequently Asked Questions

How Important is the Sequence in a Phonics Program? I recently looked at the reading material sent home with my first grade grandchild, and saw a sentence that looked like this:

The horse in the park looked like a zebra.

That single sentence contained the following:

Horse: Murmur diphthong /or/ (R-controlled vowel) and silent E/e.
Park : Murmur diphthong /ar/ (R-controlled vowel)
Looked: Special vowel sound /oo/ (diphthong)
Like: Silent E/e skill
Zebra: Two syllable word.

My grandchild did rather well in feeling his way through the material, but it was not because he had a proficient knowledge of the word structure underlying our system of writing. He was limited to his knowledge of letter-to-sound correspondences, and depended heavily on the clues provided - a picture of a horse in the park with shadows from an adjacent tree which gave it the appearance of a zebra.

I couldn't help but think of how well the Discover Intensive Phonics program lays the foundation for good reading by teaching the phonetic structure in a logical sequence. We would never expect a student to begin multiplication, fractions, or division before we had thoroughly taught the value of numbers and how to add and subtract.

Have you noticed that frequently students who are poor readers do well in math? Why is this so? Because, math has understandable logic and structure! By applying this same logical structure to reading, Discover Intensive Phonics is able to build one concept upon another until students not only read well, but also spell proficiently and write effectively.

It's true that it may take a student a few weeks longer to get into the regular reading series, but when they do - watch out! The teachers at Perrine Elementary in Twin Falls, ID put Intensive Phonics to the test with their first grade students. They held back their readers until they had completed the five phonetic skills. Then, low and behold, when they handed their students their first book, they read it immediately and went on to the second. By the end of the first grade year, their students were reading books normally used mid-year in second grade!

Each step in the Discover Intensive Phonics system builds on that which has already been taught. As each new sound is introduced it constantly reinforces, adds, and builds new patterns of language structure.

How important is this structure to the ultimate outcome as a good reader? Marily Adams in her study "Beginning to Read" states, "A word can map instantly, effortlessly and accurately from sight to meaning only to the extent that its unique, ordered sequence of letters has been learned and over learned through experience."¹

Approximately 2/3 of our students will learn to read no matter the method of instruction; but a large 1/3 will not see the 'logic to language' unless they are shown through a logical, sequential presentation.

Word counts in student textbooks reveal that 50% of the print is accounted for by only 109 different words; 90% by only 5,000 different words. It is reasonable to suppose that, not too far into their schooling, most children will have become quick to recognize most of these words by sight. But, how are they to cope with the tens of thousands of other words they see?

The coherence of text depends strongly on its frequent words (it, that, the, this, and, because, when); but the information in a text depends upon its less frequent words (doctor; infection, medicine, mold, bacteria, protect, disease).

Our goal is to produce fluent readers. Research indicates that the most critical factor beneath fluent word reading is the ability to recognize letters, spelling patterns, and whole words effortlessly, automatically, and visually. Moreover, the goal of all reading instruction - comprehension - depends critically on this ability!²

Middle school, high school, and adult students quickly see the logic in the sequential presentation of Discover Intensive Phonics. They can complete the course within three to six months. Once they have done so, they have the tools to read any length word - no need to concentrate on just survival words. ESL students love to see that there is indeed 'logic' to English!

Teaching the phonetic structure of our language in a logical sequence will insure success. Discover Intensive Phonics gives you both that insurance and assurance!

Linda L. Eversole
Certified National Trainer

¹ Adams, Marily Joyce, *Beginning to Read*: 1990. Center of Study of Reading
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

² IBID

HEC Advisory Council

We are very grateful for our Advisory Council. We would like to thank you for your responses and your efforts to help guide HEC Reading Horizons to success. As we mentioned in our last newsletter, we'd like to take this opportunity to spotlight one member of the Advisory Council in our upcoming newsletters. In this issue we are pleased to spotlight Corey Triassi of Oro Grande Elementary, Lake Havasu, AZ.

Corey tells of her experience with Discover Intensive Phonics for Yourself:

"I have been using DIP for about 15 years. A second grade teacher at the school I was teaching at brought DIP to the school and used it with her students. I heard her talking in the hall about the students coming from first grade not being prepared in the area of phonics. I taught first grade and knew I taught every page of the phonics workbook that the district had adopted. I could not believe that my students were not prepared. I sat in on a parent night that she taught which introduced her parents to DIP. I was hooked the moment I watched her decode words and explain strategies that I had never heard of before. I have been using the program since that time.

I used Modern Curriculum Press before. There is not much comparison. A workbook approach has too many concepts mixed in a lesson. They do not focus on one objective. The students can't figure out what the pictures are even after you go over each one and there is not enough practice with words. In the end, the students are not applying the strategies that you thought you had taught. The learning did not take place because the application is not evident.

I teach DIP for about 20-30 minutes each day with every class. I teach remedial reading so I have first through fifth graders. I have each group one hour a day. I teach DIP for about half the class and then we use the strategies in a directed teaching reading lesson. I've found that I am more focused on specific goals, objectives, and outcomes for my students. I do not have a mixed up approach since I am a support program. I am following the objectives and guidelines that the regular classroom teacher follows. Many of my primary students receive an Intensive Phonics lesson in their classroom and with me. We see lots of success with the consistency and follow through in my classroom and the regular classroom.

Strengths: lots of practice, easy to follow manual, no worksheets, cost effective for a school district, lots of active participation, exciting and fun for the students, students are able to learn the approach and apply it while reading.

The program/approach has helped my students tremendously. They do very well on the SAT-9 and Gates MacGinitie Reading test. They surpass or do just as well as many of the students in the regular classroom environment.

This past school year, I had a second grade student who could hardly read. I also had his two older brothers: fourth and fifth. After being introduced to DIP, he loved to read and would not put

books down. He ended the school year at a beginning third grade level in reading. His mother would take him to his older brother's baseball games and instead of watching the game or playing, he would be reading. I had to check books out of the library for him to read because he read all the books in his level in my personal library. I could not keep him supplied with enough books because he was devouring them."

We Want Your Feedback

We are interested in what you think about our products and service. Please go to our website at <http://www.readinghorizons.com/> to make any comments. Just click on the customer comments tab and express your honest opinion. We need your comments to help us better our products. Comments will only be published with written consent. Also, please take the opportunity to update your mailing and e-mail addresses so you might continue to receive quarterly newsletters. Thank you! We appreciate you!

You are receiving this e-newsletter from:

HEC Reading Horizons / HEC Software, Inc
60 North Cutler Drive, 101
North Salt Lake, UT 84054
Phone: 800-333-0054
Fax: 801-295-7088
E-mail: info@readinghorizons.com

If you wish to receive no further newsletters from HEC in your e-mail, please visit the address below and select "Unsubscribe": <http://www.readinghorizons.com/common/e-news.html>