



Literacy for All and for All a Good Life

By Carlynn McCormick

An illiterate might have found contentment in the Dark Ages but not in today's technical world.

Indeed, illiteracy is cited as the underlying cause of such national problems as drug abuse and criminal activities. Our nation looks for solutions, yet illiteracy continues to soar.

But here are two interesting facts: Research shows that most children are **capable** of learning to read. And, the vast majority of teachers teach reading because they **care** about children.

So if most children *can* learn to read and most teachers *want* to teach them, why do we have runaway illiteracy?

And why do some children in the same class learn to read while others do not? *Poverty, bad nutrition* and *coming from an illiterate family* don't pan out as the cause, because *wealth, good nutrition, and coming from a literate family*, does not guarantee a child will read.

Is the actual cause the **way** reading is taught?

Millions have been spent researching and developing reading programs. What is in vogue today, however, may be in disrepute tomorrow and then repackaged and back in vogue a few years later. My older sister, for example, was taught basic phonics; two

years later I was taught sight reading; and three years after that my younger sister was taught “new” phonics. What is amazing, we went to the same award-winning elementary school. Year-to-year, there was no consistency in the way the administration required reading to be taught.

In teacher’s college, the pattern continued: “tried and true” methods were often replaced with the “latest and greatest.” When I began teaching reading, I tried program after program from the McGuffey Readers to the “Reading Revolution.” Some programs were better than others but thirty years of teaching confirmed all programs needed tailoring to prevent children from the proverbial “falling through the cracks.” The tailoring amounted to overcoming precise barriers to study using the techniques developed by educator Mr. L. Ron Hubbard.

You see it is failure to learn the sounds (more than 40) in the English language and the 72 ways they are coded, that can prevent students from learning to read. It is easy to see that a student couldn’t possibly be competent in math without knowing the symbols for *add*, *subtract*, *multiply* and *divide*. It is no different with reading. A student won’t really be competent if he doesn’t know how to read, write and spell the sounds of English.

What was needed was a reading program that would define phonic basics so *any* child could understand them; a program that would define the ways a sound can be spelled so *any* child could spell well; a program that would maintain proven methods such as adequate drilling. And perhaps most importantly, a program *all* caring teachers could use to make *all* students good readers.

Amazingly, in 2006 a team of educators at *Applied Scholastics International* created such a reading program. And by the next year *Applied Scholastics Academies* around the nation began delivering it.

Sunny Jensen, director of *Applied Scholastics Academy of the Valley* in California, said, *“With this reading program every student in my entire school is reading at or far above grade level. Students who were struggling with reading when they first enrolled are now whizzing along. It’s hard to put in words how happy this makes students and parents.”*

In truth, if the *Applied Scholastics™ Reading Program* were to be implemented in the majority of schools in the nation, illiteracy would be wiped out within a generation.

And so a new vision is attainable: literacy for all and for all a good life!

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