

**Early Reading Curriculum
Research Pilot Project
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**Learning Dynamics Preschools and Learning
Dynamics Reading System**

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Early Reading Curriculum Research Pilot Project

The International Education Institute is currently overseeing an unfunded early reading research project that we hope to expand with a federal grant. Below is background on two curricula we're using in this project, as well as an update on the 5-month-old project.

Our pilot study combines two curricula that demonstrate success in teaching 3- and 4-year-olds how to read. In our current study we are using the curricula primarily with 4-year-old preschoolers and 5-year-old kindergartners.

The curricula take about 1/2 hour of class instructional time per day, plus we recommend:

- Volunteers, older students, or aides be used to provide 20 minutes of one-on-one reading time with each child per week.
- Curriculum-related music and videos (with background classical music) be played during art and/or rest time.
- Students be provided access to computerized curriculum up to ½ hour per day. This is much more than a reading curriculum; this is a thinking curriculum, a science curriculum and a reading curriculum all wrapped up into one. Children thrive on this intellectually when given the opportunity.
- Books, videos and computerized curricula be checked out to students as "homework," and that parents be encouraged to spend ½ hour a day in a reading-related activity with their child.

MID-YEAR SURVEY OF PILOT STUDY TEACHERS:

We sent a Mid-Year Survey to all participating teachers in this Pilot Project. Every teacher has responded that the primary curriculum being tested – **Learning**

Dynamics Reading System -- is as good as or better than the best reading curriculum they have ever used in the past.

The teachers evaluated the curriculum from several perspectives, responding to a series of nine questions. The teachers were asked to respond, rating **Learning Dynamics Reading System** with the following scoring values:

- 1 = Much worse than best curriculum previously used.
- 2 = A little worse than best curriculum previously used.
- 3 = About the same as best curriculum previously used.
- 4 = A little better than best curriculum previously used.
- 5 = Much better than best curriculum previously used.

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QUESTIONS WITH AVERAGE RESPONSE:

RATING OF LEARNING DYNAMICS READING SYSTEM AVERAGE COMPARED TO BEST CURRICULUM USED IN THE PAST SCORE

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1) In how long it takes with Learning Dynamics Reading System for children to learn the <u>letter names.</u> (Rate FP 1-5) | 4.6 |
| 2) In how long it takes with Learning Dynamics Reading System for children to learn the <u>letter sounds.</u> (Rate FP 1-5) | 4.3 |
| 3) In how long it takes to get children <u>blending words.</u> | 4.4 |
| 4) How long it takes to get children reading <u>complete sentences.</u> | 4.4 |
| 5) How well it helps children build <u>reading vocabulary.</u> | 4.4 |
| 6) In terms of reading age, level you estimate your <u>average</u> reader has achieved this year <u>so far.</u> | 3.9 |
| 7) In terms of reading age, level you estimate your <u>average</u> reader will achieve <u>by the end of the year.</u> | 4.3 |
| 8) In terms of reading age, level you estimate your <u>better</u> readers will achieve by the end of the year. | 4.7 |
| 9) In terms of reading age, level you estimate your <u>worst</u> readers will achieve by the end of the year. | 3.4 |
| AVERAGE RESPONSE TO ALL QUESTIONS: | 4.3 |

MID-YEAR INTERVIEWS OF PILOT STUDY TEACHERS

None of the schools participating in this year's Early Reading Pilot Project is actually using the curricula exactly as recommended. Those implementing the curricula most closely to how it was recommended seem to be having the greatest success – and, thus, rate **LEARNING DYNAMICS READING SYSTEM** more highly in the Mid-Term Survey. Several of the schools are making an effort to adjust their implementation more in line with original recommendations.

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Part of the problem in controlling the Early Reading Pilot Project is that there is no full-time oversight provided by the International Education Institute for lack of funding. Another problem is – although they received heavy discounts – each school paid for its own curricula and made no strict commitments on how the curricula would be implemented. As the project is expanded, it is anticipated that the curricula will be provided free of charge and other incentives provided in exchange for certain contractual understandings.

Results of Mid-Term Surveys of the participating teachers and schools:

ENTIAT (WASH.) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Kindergarten teacher Kim Remsberg of the **Entiat (Wash.) Elementary School** has 33 students, split between two half-day classes.

“It’s going great,” says Ms. Remsberg. “They are leaps and bounds above where they were last year. I couldn’t be more pleased.”

She says some of her students knew no letters or sounds when they arrived at class, but with this program knew all letters and sounds by the end of the first quarter. By mid-January, she says, “Most of my kids are what I would call emergent readers. They can sound out many words. They are doing a lot of blending...“I’m just really pleased. This program gives them a ton of skills. They don’t have the problem they’ve had in the past with blends. It’s really been amazing this year,” she says.

INITIATIVE LEARNING CENTER IN NAMPA, IDAHO

The **Initiative Learning Center in Nampa, Idaho**, has 24 three-year-old preschoolers; 32 four-year-old preschoolers; and 27 kindergartners involved in the pilot project. The 4- and 5-year-olds are using primarily the **Learning Dynamics Reading System** program, while the 3-year-olds are using primarily the Reading Master curriculum.

Nancy McDonald, director of the private preschool, says the program so far has been very successful, and parents are very happy. “In fact, my other teacher is not

participating this year, and her parents are complaining, so she's decided to do it next year." Mrs. McDonald highly recommends the **Learning Dynamics Reading System**.

Kindergarten teacher Teresa Wilkins says. "I love the program. The kids really get into it. At first I thought, 'The boys aren't going to get into this.' But they really do enjoy it."

Of her 27 students, she says, "I have only three who don't know all of their letters yet, and all are young for the class." One of the younger students, however, can actually sound out the words; he just doesn't know all the letter names yet.

Nonetheless, the class, which meets ½ day, four days a week, has nearly completed the first set of three "prebooks" and 10 readers.

Individually, some of the students have caught fire and are zooming ahead. Four children are in the second set of 10 books; two children are in the third set of 10 books; and one has completed all four sets of books that come with the program.

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"I've never had this many kindergartners reading at this point of the year, so that's exciting," said Ms. Wilkins, when interviewed Jan. 21.

Preschool teacher Diana Bradshaw of Initiative Learning Center is perhaps even more impressed with the **Learning Dynamics Reading System** program, although her expectations for her 4-year-olds were not as high since they meet with her only twice a week for 2½ hours a session.

"It's the best curriculum I've used," she says. "It's going wonderfully. The kids are doing fantastic. We will probably only get through the first set of books, but they are already reading sentences."

She said a couple of her 32 students are struggling to keep up, but, on the other hand, some of the children caught on very quickly and are moving rapidly ahead of the rest of the class.

SELKIRK (WASH.) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Trish Fairbairn, kindergarten teacher at **Selkirk (Wash.) Elementary School**, is very pleased with what she sees so far, but plans to redo her teaching schedule next year to better accommodate the curricula.

"The children that are reading are further along than they have ever been. There is only one kid in the whole class that is not reading. But usually by this time the kids are just barely starting," she explained in a January interview.

"My higher students are mostly in Books 4-6 in the Red Books (the second set of 10 readers). The highest is close to Book 10. I still have two in the prebooks. The rest are scattered throughout the Blue Books (the first set of 10 books)," she says.

"I like it really well," she says. "What I like best is that it gets them through so quickly. When I first saw that they had two letters a week, I didn't think they could do it," she says, but early success with prebooks gets the children excited that they can read, and away they go.

Ms. Fairbairn is allocating more time to the curriculum during the second semester. But even during the first semester she arranged to have someone read with the children one-on-one every day. She had four third-graders on Tuesdays and Thursdays read with the children. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, she had an

aide to help, so she could read with the children herself. She and her aide have now increased their individual reading time to 45 minutes a day, Monday through Friday, and are able to provide 5-10 minutes of one-on-one time a day to each child.

Ms. Fairbairn says as of late February, all but one of her students was reading.

“The whole group will be further along than ever before,” she says. “I think there are a few kids that will finish all four sets of books. ... They are learning more, and the books are fantastic.”

“We’ve started on long vowels. This is much better than anything I’ve used before, so now we are using **Learning Dynamics Reading System** everyday for about 15 minutes. The children enjoy the books more than the ones I’ve used previously. Thanks for introducing them to us!” says Ms. Fairbairn.

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She is now also using Reading Master more than previously. Her class watches about 20 minutes of the Reading Master videotapes daily after lunch, and the children are allowed to take the related books home to read with their parents.

KELSO, WASH., SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kari Arlint, kindergarten teacher at **Rose Valley Elementary School in Kelso, Wash.**, sees the need for some changes in the way she’s administering the program, but, when last interviewed in December, still felt that “even the slow kids are 5-6 months ahead of where they would have been.”

“This is just what I’ve been looking for,” she says. She feels that 7-8 of her 30 half-time students are already reading past first-grade level, while slow students without much support at home are still progressing faster than before.

The music is one of the most important elements of the Learning Dynamics Reading System curriculum, she says. “The more they listen to the music, the more they like it. I was afraid they would get tired of it.”

Ms. Arlint is using sixth-graders to help read with her students. She is also sending photocopies of lessons home for children to review with their parents. About 2/3 of the children are getting stickers for getting parents to sign off on the assignment.

The curriculum and the early reading success encourage parental involvement, Ms. Arlint says. “Most parents are now involved – even those who obviously haven’t been as involved with their children as they should have been in the past.”

Ms. Arlint has developed puppets to go along with the curriculum so children can each, in turn, stand up with their puppet letter as the class reviews the alphabet or sings the curriculum’s Alphabet Song.

She also glued magnetic strips on the back of the letter figurines the children “earn” as they pass off each letter so the children can stick them on their refrigerators at home.

Ms. Arlint has recently had to take an extended medical leave, and was one of the teachers who has thus far not responded to the Mid-Term Survey. Meanwhile, the

substitute is unfamiliar with **Learning Dynamics Reading System**, so the final results of this class may have to carry an asterisk.

Rebecca Fountain, kindergarten teacher at **Butler Acres Elementary in Kelso**, says the **Learning Dynamics Reading System** curriculum is working well in her class. Student reading ranged from prebooks to Book 4 in first set when we visited her in early December. She is also trying to blend it in with her old curriculum, and sometimes has her children watch Reading Master videos, as well.

She finds **Learning Dynamics Reading System** very user-friendly and easy to blend with her other curriculum. She felt that it was too early to compare the curriculum with other curricula, however.

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BOISTFORT (WASH.) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

When we visited **Boistfort (Wash.) Elementary School** in December, we found the teachers were pleased with the pilot project, but were implementing it differently than most schools. They are using the supplemental Reading Master curriculum much more than the other schools, but are behind in their use of **Learning Dynamics Reading System**.

Educators there are most excited about the Reading Master curriculum, although they are struggling to find a good way to provide ongoing assessment of the children's reading progress achieved with that program.

The Reading Master system expects children to absorb reading vocabulary over a period of time using the curriculum – not necessarily letter by letter or word by word in an organized fashion. Also it offers no regular teacher's manual with lesson plans to use in teacher-led instruction. Consequently, most teachers have been uncomfortable with its approach.

Boistfort educators, however, decided to send 5-6 preschoolers, kindergartners and first-graders at a time to the library, where Nancy Reber oversees their use of Reading Master's computerized curriculum. The expansion of vocabulary and the intellectual excitement caused by the program has the educators pleased though still puzzled about how to fully utilize the program and assess the results.

They see the curriculum as much more than a reading program, however. The curriculum includes lessons on such topics as clouds, zoo animals, birds, astronomy, horses and cats – and in all of these subjects, it refuses to speak down to the children. The books include much information that most adults do not know.

“They are definitely learning a lot,” says Mrs. Reber. Older students are “in awe” of what the younger students are learning through the program. For example, some overheard the younger children talking about different breeds of horses and how horses are measured in “hands.” The younger children were trying to figure out how tall a Shetland pony is, using the hands method.

Most children use the computerized system about 15 minutes a day, although some use it a second time during an after-school program. The children are very animated by the program. The educators are considering whether more than 15 minutes should be provided. They do not want the children to get bored by it. But so far there is no sign that would happen with a little additional time on the curriculum.

Mrs. Vandemeer, the special education teacher, has also found the curriculum to be very well received by her students. She has finally found a curriculum that seems to reach a fifth-grade autistic child who was not responding well to anything else. She feels Reading Master will be very valuable in helping her students with “holes” in their education.

To help with assessment, she has developed a list of vocabulary words used in each book. She also has correlated the books a little better so non-fiction books and related fiction books in the curriculum support each other better in the development of reading vocabulary.

When interviewed in December, kindergarten teacher Kathy Gjelten of Boistfort School, said her average student was still in the **Learning Dynamics Reading**

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System prebooks, but she anticipated much more emphasis and progress starting in January, now that the children know all the letters and sounds.

She has not had much support from volunteers or others in order to provide the needed one-on-one reading with the children, she says.

Boistfort preschool teacher Cindy Dykstra also lacks help for one-on-one work. Her goal for her 4-year-olds is fairly modest – to have all her students know all the letters and their sounds by the end of the school year, and to begin some word blending.

Neither of the teachers has been sending books, tapes or CDs home with the children to practice with their parents, because the educators have been concerned they might lose some of the materials. They do plan to work out a library checkout system in January.

WESTGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, KENNEWICK

Debbie Clayton has a full-day ESL kindergarten class at **Westgate Elementary School** in Kennewick, Wash. Despite their English deficiencies, she says more than half of her students were already through the prebooks and halfway through the first set of 10 readers, as of mid-December.

Their current book has 61 words, and the students’ book reading is picking up, as nearly every child now knows all the letters of the alphabet and their sounds. Most of the children – including those who came to school without knowing more than a couple of letters – knew all the letters and sounds by Nov. 5 – “much quicker than ever before,” she says.

One of the more advanced students now came to class without knowing any English whatsoever. He seems to be having no problem learning to understand the language at the same pace that he learns to read his new language.

“I have a lot more kids who know the letters and sounds than before,” Mrs. Clayton says, “and they love the songs.”

She expects most of the children will complete both of the first two sets of Red and Blue books by the end of the year.” That is comparable to where the Learning Dynamics preschool students were at when they surpassed mid-first-grade reading last year on the DRA test last spring.

Mrs. Clayton spends about 20 minutes each afternoon in group instruction of **Learning Dynamics Reading System**, particularly emphasizing the musical portions of the curriculum. She then has four para-educators come in for 1 hour a day to work with the children ½ hour on reading and ½ hour on math. In the morning she uses the Open Court curriculum with the children, which is a curriculum she has used for several years.

Bonnie Moorhouse has 49 students in two half-time classes at Westgate Elementary School in Kennewick, Wash. She, as Debbie Clayton, is using both **Learning Dynamics Reading System** and Open Court, and she feels the two work very well together.

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“Open Court can be kind of boring by itself,” she says. “I like how fast Learning Dynamics Reading System goes along, and I love the music.” She also likes the motivation provided when children earn little figurines for learning the name and sound of a letter.

Most of her students are nearing the end of the first set of FP reading books. Ms. Moorhouse is interested in seeing how her students progress during the last half year of class. “Already I’ve seen some growth with students that were really behind. But suddenly they understand, and I think, ‘Wow! You’re really getting it.’”

Mrs. Moorhouse says the biggest problem in using **Learning Dynamics Reading System** and Open Court is confusion when she is not teaching the same letter with each curriculum.

WILSON CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Debbie Dammel has 12 students in her kindergarten class at **Wilson Creek Elementary School**. As we near mid-term, we have not been able to re-interview her. But in October, she was very excited about the **Learning Dynamics Reading System** program. Ms. Dammel said the children love the music and benefit so much from it that she had copied the music to send home with her students. I promised to make sure that was OK with the company.

Debbie also uses the Reading Master videos, running them as children arrive to the classroom.

She felt her children are learning faster than with previously used curricula. But also said **Learning Dynamics Reading System** needs to develop more worksheets. She was borrowing compatible worksheets from other curricula or developing new worksheets herself.

In her Mid-Term Survey, Debbie rated **Learning Dynamics Reading System** very high, giving the curriculum a 4 or 5 rating in response each question, indicating that

the curriculum is going significantly better than any she has used in the past. She also noted that she is starting to use Reading Master more now that her classroom has received several computers, and her students now take home **Learning Dynamics Reading System** or Reading Master books, music, videos or computer CDs 3-4 times a week – more than many of the other participating classrooms.

SUGGESTIONS FROM LEARNING DYNAMICS READING SYSTEM

Learning Dynamics Reading System President points out that some teachers are not achieving as much success because they are obviously not following the program as designed. Those teachers, for example, who say they have used the curriculum to teach all the letters and sounds, but whose students have not nearly completed at least the first set of books, are clearly not following the lesson plans.

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Teachers who are teaching letters and sounds separate from the individual reading books are missing the primary power of the curriculum, he says. "One of the things that drives the program is that children start blending words and reading books after learning just a few letters. This really motivates them. They need to be reading words and they need to be reading books after just a handful of letters to reinforce these skills. If they do not follow the lessons as outlined, they won't have the same results."

BACKGROUND ON LEARNING DYNAMICS' and LEARNING DYNAMICS READING SYSTEM CURRICULUM

Learning Dynamics Reading System, developed at the Learning Dynamics preschool in Orem, Utah, uses a simple phonics approach to reading that young children are able to comprehend and put to immediate use.

The set of books that comes with the curriculum is created to provide children with almost immediate reading success. Most kindergartners could be expected to begin reading their first simple book within their first month of school. The learning is enhanced by the lyrics of sing-along music provided on CD. The curriculum's own "Alphabet Song" teaches each letter of the alphabet along with its sound(s). The preschool has also created a separate song for each letter, as well as songs to remember certain rules, such as what to do when two vowels come together.

At our request, the preschool had tested a sampling of students with the San Diego Reading Test, a quick word recognition test. The average student was rated at beginning second grade in reading. However, we felt the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) test would more accurately represent a student's true reading

proficiency. Also we wanted to administer the Kennewick (Wash.) School District's kindergarten test, which teachers administer at the beginning and end of the kindergarten year -- and sometimes in between -- so we could compare pre-reading skills with those of students in a district with a national reputation for aggressive reading instruction.

So, on June 7, 2002, five volunteers from the National Reading Foundation and I conducted Kennewick's kindergarten and DRA first-grade tests on the Learning Dynamics preschoolers.

The 19 students tested were randomly selected from the center's approximately 115 6-hour-per-week preschoolers. The preschool also has about that many 4-hour-a-week preschoolers, but we specifically requested the 6-hour group, since that would more closely approximate a 15-hour-a-week kindergarten.

In the Kennewick School District's own kindergarten test -- which includes letter recognition, letter sounds, beginning word sounds, and rhyming -- the preschool graduates outperformed Kennewick's outgoing kindergartners, as shown below. Total number of points possible on the test is 98.

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SCHOOL	ENTERING SCORE	FINAL SCORE
Canyon View	40.13	89.64
Edison	27.01	82.43
Vista	36.91	96.47
Westgate	28.21	93.86
KENN. SCHOOL AVERAGE	33.07	90.60
LEARNING DYNAMICS	n/a	95.42

The only individual school that outperformed Learning Dynamics -- of the four whose statistics were provided by the district -- was Vista Elementary, a national award-winning school.

Meanwhile, we also administered the Developmental Reading Assessment test, used on Kennewick first-graders but not on kindergartners.

There are 11 books in the first-grade DRA test, each representing a gradual increase in reading ability from first month through the ninth month. The Learning Dynamics preschoolers could read -- with 90% proficiency -- through Book 6 (actually 6.21) on the average, slightly above the halfway point in the tested first-grade reading skills.

There are difficulties in making comparisons between Kennewick's kindergartners and Learning Dynamics' preschoolers. On one hand, Learning Dynamics is a private preschool. Parents who are willing to pay for such schooling are more supportive, and probably have been from their child's birth.

On the other hand, Kennewick's students are a year older and have a year more maturity and in-home or preschool training. Also, Kennewick's kindergarten is half-day for most students and full-day for ESL students. The Learning Dynamics students we tested only attend class two hours a day, three days a week -- six hours total per

week. And the preschool officials say the reading curriculum is only used for 15-20 minutes a day during those three days per week – about 1 hour total per week. In addition, each child has 10 minutes of individual reading time per week, and their parents are encouraged to read with their children every day -- as are Kennewick's.

Finally, Kennewick's students would be more familiar with the testing procedure. KSD kindergartners frequently take the kindergarten test (exact same test) several times during the year, so their final test score will be artificially high due to familiarity. Students who typically take the DRA are at least in first grade -- more mature and more experienced in taking such tests than Learning Dynamics' preschoolers were.

Many others are also successfully using this curriculum. Verda Rogers Johnson, teacher-administrator of the Christian Co-Op Nursery and Rainbow Days Pre-K, says she has experienced similar success to that achieved at Learning Dynamics. Her preschool began using **Learning Dynamics Reading System** in August of 2001, and she says all the children were reading by December. "We love the songs and the characters for each letter! As a teacher, it is the joy and interest the children take in learning that I feel makes this program such a success. They can hardly wait for me to

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introduce the next letter! The books are wonderful, offering a variety of skill levels, and the lesson plans are well designed."

The **Learning Dynamics Reading System** curriculum starts by teaching one vowel and five consonants, one letter at a time. Then there is a book for the children to read that uses only those six sounds. After a review and some time to absorb, the curriculum goes on to another vowel and then another five consonants. Additional books allow the children to experience gradually increased reading success from Month 1.

In a kindergarten setting, we recommend that a 20- to 30-minute lesson be taught every day -- and twice a day for ESL students attending a full-day kindergarten. Even at just 25 minutes a day, that would be 125 minutes per five-day week -- more than double the time used at the Learning Dynamics preschool.

Once the children begin reading, it is important to have aides, volunteers or older students available to provide one-on-one time. For each child to have 20 minutes a week of one-on-one reading time, you will need aides and volunteers to provide approximately two man hours of assistance daily. With its limited 6-hour-a-week preschool schedule, Learning Dynamics only provides 10 minutes a week of one-on-one time, but we recommend more one-on-one in a half-time and full-time kindergartens. A local Reading Foundation or PTA could help recruit volunteers.

The instructional music is very important in this curriculum. We recommend the music be played during art and/or rest periods. It is bright, fun music, and children will absorb the lyrics (and, thus, the instruction) more quickly as they hear the music repeated. They can even be introduced to the music relating to new phonic sounds before those sounds are taught in class. If you had 1/2 hour of art time, for example, you might first play in the background the curriculum's "Alphabet Song." That would take 5 minutes or less. Then turn on the specific music for the "letter of the day" to

play repeatedly for 5-10 minutes. And, finally, for the next 15 minutes, have the CD player play the entire CD, starting at whatever point you think appropriate. While doing art, the children would subconsciously be learning how to read.

BACKGROUND ON READING MASTER SUPPLEMENTAL READING CURRICULUM

We supplement the **Learning Dynamics Reading System** curriculum with one developed in New Zealand that merges Montessori phonics, Doman whole word recognition, and accelerated multi-sensory learning techniques.

Learning Dynamics Reading System was created by teachers originally for exclusive use in a classroom. It was then adapted for in-home use. Reading Master was created primarily for in-home use by busy parents who want some high-tech assistance to teach their preschoolers. Thus, it can be used effectively as a supplemental curriculum and as student "homework."

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The Reading Master curriculum comes as a package with a book version, videotaped version and computerized version to deliver the same basic curriculum through a variety of media and senses. The curriculum is being used effectively in numerous classrooms, but the company founder considers the individualized approaches, implementing video and interactive CD-ROM, the most effective. By providing these three different formats, the three major learning styles – visual, auditory and kinesthetic – are addressed. The curriculum emphasizes the accelerated learning strategies developed by U.S. educator Glenn Doman to teach 70 minimal sound units (phonograms) and 450 most-used English words.

Reading Master has assisted more than 36,000 children in Australasia and as far away as Luxemburg, Sweden, South Africa, China and the United States. At first its approach and results were controversial. Now it is generally viewed as educational best practice in that part of the world and has been the subject of several studies, special mention on TVNZ's Assignment program and a Ph.D thesis. The company claims it has never received even a single reported case of a child failing to learn how to read using its curriculum.

Because of the distance, we were unable to send independent evaluators, but we list below the comments of some of the school and preschool administrators who have used the curriculum.

Wrote Mary Ellen Maunz of Montessori International: "The Reading Master System is a unique blend of effective methods, produced in an outstanding format. The quality of information and lovely illustrations make these books a must. In our 25 years of developing programs and combining the best of the best, we discovered that Doman flashcards with Spalding phonics makes a great combination. Reading Master made the same discovery."

Dr. Cynthia Thrush, Ph.D Education (Cognitive Science), made a similar observation: "I've spent 30 years of my life with children in schools, and in all those years I have never seen a program that successfully combined phonics, whole brain learning plus accelerated learning techniques and music and color as the Reading Master does."

Co-developer Grant Ford recounts the success experienced by Principal David Foster and the Hunua Primary School in Auckland (and verified by us in a recent phone interview).

"David had a group of children ranging in ages from 7 to 9 years of age that were in the 4th percentile for reading in their respective age groups. ... These children had been through at least six months of the State Reading Recovery program and had even had one-on-one tutoring for four months after that. Yet despite the resources thrown at the problem, they were still averaging the 4th percentile for reading for their age.

"These children were allowed access to the Reading Master books and 30 minutes per day unsupervised on the Reading Master CD-Rom. After just under 4 months, these children averaged the 86th percentile in reading for their age."

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Because of the multi-sensory, individualized approach, Reading Master purports to have been used successfully with dyslexic, autistic, adult, and ESL students. David Foster, the Hunua School principal, wrote: "A child who had been causing major concern caught up two years worth of reading progress in under six months. Your work has produced a valuable resource that compliments and reinforces the vital elements of any successful school reading program."

Patrick J. Lynch, Executive Director of the Catholic Education Office NZ, adds: "Congratulations on the production of the Reading Master System, which is excellent and timely, especially when teachers are looking for better ways to teach youngsters the basics of literacy. I am happy to promote the material among our Integrated Schools and schools generally."

The Reading Master Curriculum has been set up primarily for in-home and independent study. While it has been adapted by some educators for classroom use, we see its use at this time as a supplemental curriculum. The book-based, videotaped and CD-ROM versions of the curriculum could be checked out and sent home with students as part of their "homework" assignment. Students might also access the CD version in class if computers are available – which we highly recommend -- and the videotaped version can be played sometimes (in lieu of the **Learning Dynamics Reading System** music CD) during art or quiet time. The videotaped version includes classical music in the background.

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of helping children become early readers is clear. The cliché is all too true: "Until third grade children learn to read. After third grade they read to learn."

Children who do not read at grade level before fourth grade then begin falling behind in all subjects because they cannot fully comprehend their textbooks. These children then begin developing a negative self-image, and by sixth grade they are 10 times as likely to be sent to the principal's office for disciplinary problems.

Following their departure from school, such students then fill our welfare roles, our prisons and our minimum-wage, dead-end jobs. Just the financial cost to our economy has been estimated in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

The cost of illiteracy and low literacy in terms of impact on individuals' lives and on our society as a whole is just too great not to address with every available resource.

The International Education Institute believes that children can and should be taught how to read beginning at a much earlier age than expected in American society. Parents can begin teaching their children at birth. Reading Master has shown that children can learn to read by age 2 – as naturally as they learn to speak.

Child-care centers and preschools can contribute much more toward reading development -- and not at a high cost in curriculum or staffing. And schools can effectively teach reading in kindergarten rather than waiting for first grade, as many school districts do.

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RESULTS

The preschool graduates outperformed Kennewick's outgoing kindergartners, as shown below. Total number of points possible on the test is 98.

SCHOOL	ENTERING SCORE	FINAL SCORE
Canyon View	40.13	89.64
Edison	27.01	82.43
Vista	36.91	96.47
Westgate	28.21	93.86
KENN. SCHOOL AVERAGE	33.07	90.60
LEARNING DYNAMICS	n/a	95.42

- June 7 tested 19 L/D students w/ Kennewick's kindergarten and DRA first-grade tests
- L/D kids 6 hrs/wk w/ <2 hrs on reading, Kind in US 15 hrs/wk w/ 5hrs on reading
- The only individual school whose end-of-year kindergartners outperformed Learning Dynamics' end-of-year preschoolers was Vista Elementary, a national award-winning school
- DRA test – L/D read w/ 90% proficiency 6/11 = 1.6 grade level

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“**Learning Dynamics Reading System** could push subsequent reading assessment scores up half a grade level as the kindergartners proceed through the primary grades”

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Learning Dynamics Reading System

Learning Dynamics Reading System, developed at the Learning Dynamics preschool in Orem, Utah, uses a simple phonics approach to reading that young children are able to comprehend and put to immediate use.

The set of books that comes with the curriculum is created to provide children with almost immediate reading success. Most 4-year-old preschoolers and 5-year-old kindergartners can begin reading their first simple book within their first month of class. The learning is enhanced by the lyrics of sing-along music provided on CD. The curriculum's own "Alphabet Song" teaches each letter of the alphabet along with its sound(s). The preschool has also created a separate song for each letter, as well as songs to remember certain rules, such as what to do when two vowels come together or if a word ends with an “e”.

The music, I believe, is the strongest part of the curriculum. Teachers have told me their students love the music and request to sing it more often, and the students are making the connection between the lyrics of the songs, the names and sounds of the letters, and the use of the letters in creating and decoding words.

The curriculum starts by teaching one vowel and five consonants, one letter at a time. Then there is a book for the children to read that uses only those six sounds. After a review and some time to absorb, the curriculum goes on to another vowel and another five consonants. Additional books allow the children to experience gradually increased reading success from Month 1.

At my request, the preschool tested a sampling of students with the San Diego Reading Test, a quick word recognition test. The average student was rated at beginning second grade in reading. Kennewick School District's Artis Sparks felt the

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) test would more accurately represent a student's true reading proficiency, however. Also we wanted to administer the Kennewick District's own kindergarten test, which teachers administer at the beginning and end of the kindergarten year -- and sometimes in between to determine reading readiness skills rather than reading skills, per se.

So, on June 7, five other educators and I administered Kennewick's kindergarten and DRA first-grade tests on a random sampling of Learning Dynamics preschoolers.

The 19 students tested were randomly selected from the center's approximately 115 6-hour-per-week preschoolers. The preschool also has about that many 4-hour-a-week preschoolers, but we specifically requested the 6-hour group, since that would more closely approximate 15-hour-a-week kindergartens.

In the Kennewick School District's own kindergarten test -- which includes letter recognition, letter sounds, beginning word sounds, and rhyming -- the preschool graduates outperformed Kennewick's outgoing kindergartners, as shown below. Total number of points possible on the test is 98.

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SCHOOL	ENTERING SCORE	FINAL SCORE
Canyon View	40.13	89.64
Edison	27.01	82.43
Vista	36.91	96.47
Westgate	28.21	93.86
KENN. SCHOOL AVERAGE	33.07	90.60
LEARNING DYNAMICS	n/a	95.42

The only individual school whose end-of-year kindergartners outperformed Learning Dynamics' end-of-year preschoolers was Vista Elementary, a national award-winning school.

Meanwhile, we also administered the Developmental Reading Assessment test, used on Kennewick first-graders but not on kindergartners.

There are 11 books in the first-grade DRA test, each representing a gradual increase in reading ability from first month through the ninth month. The Learning Dynamics preschoolers could read -- with 90% proficiency -- through Book 6 (actually 6.21) on the average, slightly above the halfway point in the tested first-grade reading skills.

The Learning Dynamics preschoolers only attend class a maximum of 6 hours a week, of which less than 2 hours is spent on the reading curriculum. Most kindergartners in the U.S. are in school about 15 hours a week, of which at least 5 hours can be spent on reading-related curriculum. So, if kindergartners could spend 2-3 times as much classroom time on the LD curriculum and could achieve only the

same level of reading as the Learning Dynamics preschoolers, that would still have a tremendous impact on reading levels in U.S. public schools. It could push subsequent reading assessment scores up half a grade level as the kindergartners proceed through the primary grades.

PRODUCT ANALYSIS

The **Learning Dynamics Reading System** curriculum was created by professional teachers for use in a classroom. It is excellent, and has been demonstrated to be very successful in preschools, kindergarten classes, and in homes.