

Brook Knoll Elementary School Reading Assistance Pilot Project

In the spring of 1998, Erin Duncan, now owner of Read America Clinic, worked with Brook Knoll Elementary School in Scotts Valley, California, to conduct a pilot reading assistance project using the Phono-Graphix® reading and spelling method.

The 15 participants were identified by their fifth grade (US, ages 10-11) teachers as the very lowest-level readers, struggling with the fundamental skills needed for successful reading. Their teachers and principal were concerned about these students entering middle school (US) the following year, where no more reading instruction was likely to be provided. All were concerned that these students would have difficulty with the work required of them in sixth grade.

The children were pulled from their regular classrooms to receive instruction in groups of five. Each group met for an hour, approximately three times per week, as other school activities permitted. The program, started very late in the school year, lasted only eight weeks, giving an average of just over 10.2 hours of group instruction per child.

The Phono-Graphix Reading Subskills Diagnostic Test was administered before instruction began and upon completion of the project. Every student showed some improvement in his/her skills:

Phono-Graphix Reading Subskills Diagnostic Test

	Average Intake Scores:	Average Final Scores:
Segmenting (out of 63)	48.3	61.9
Blending (out of 15)	13.5	14.6
Phoneme Manipulation (out of 10)	7.1	9.3
Code Knowledge	74.1%	85.9%

Brook Knoll's principal, Kathy Frandle, administered pre- and post-tests of Word Identification and Word Attack, subtests of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test – Revised, forms G and H. Average gains were over a year in Word Identification and nearly three years in Word Attack:

Woodcock Reading Mastery Test – Revised : Average Scores

	Intake Grade Equivalent Scores:	Final Grade Equivalent Scores:
Word Identification (reading a list of real words)	4.2	5.5
Word Attack (reading nonsense words)	4.5	7.3

Woodcock Reading Mastery Test – Revised: Individual Student Scores

Student	Total Hours	Word Identification		Word Attack	
		Initial	Final	Initial	Final
1	11	4.1	4.7	2.2	3.2
2	11	3.6	3.9	3.7	7.9
3	10.5	3.8	5.5	2.6	6.7
4	10	4.6	5.3	3.2	12.7
5	11	4.6	5.7	4.9	7.9
6	9	4.6	5.8	8.0	4.6
7	9.5	4.1	4.7	3.4	3.0
8	9.5	3.5	5.2	3.4	3.7
9	9.5	5.5	8.3	13.1	16.9
10	10	4.6	7.4	9.7	16.9
11	11	5.3	7.7	3.2	16.9
12	12.5	3.7	4.3	3.2	6.7
13	11	3.6	3.9	2.3	7.9
14	12	4.3	5.2	3.4	5.2

Brook Knoll's principal reports that the parents of the participating students were thrilled. One parent wrote the following letter about her daughter's progress:

Mrs. Frandle, Mrs. Holgers and Ms. Duncan-

Thank you for giving [my daughter] the opportunity to improve her reading skills. I do not have sophisticated tests available to measure effectiveness. However, I can tell you that her reading confidence is definitely stronger! For the first time since I can remember (at least two years), [my daughter] offered to read a story to her brother and me. This was the same child who couldn't be coaxed to read to us a few months ago (I finally gave up asking her).

Her reading confidence was the best result I could have hoped for.
Thank you so much for giving [my daughter] this opportunity!

Mother of Student #10 in the chart above

District trustee, Mike Smith, commented after hearing about the project, "This is a fantastic safety net. Here are 15 potential drop-outs that won't happen." (Santa Cruz Sentinel, "Brook Knoll reading project gets results", C-10 - Sunday, July 19, 1998)

Brook Knoll has continued this reading assistance program independently, having trained several teachers and aides for that purpose. The program was expanded to include fourth-grade students (US) the following year, with a plan to extend the program further in the coming years, to help students of all grades. Further, Brook Knoll and the other elementary school in its district have provided Phono-Graphix training for every teacher, from kindergarten through fifth grade.