

The Decoder

THE VOICE OF THE WILSON COMMUNITY

FINALIST FOR URBAN EDUCATION AWARD

Ysleta (Texas) Independent School District

Early 1990s: Ysleta Independent School District (YISD) operates at state minimum achievement levels.

Late 1990s: YISD is named a "Recognized District" for student performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test.

2010 and 2011: YISD is chosen as one of four finalists for the Broad Prize for Urban Education.

Turnaround? You bet! Magic? Absolutely not!

Success came from working hard and smart, and Wilson is proud to be part of the effort beginning in 2006. According to Ruth Stern, Wilson Sr. Literacy Advisor, the successful implementation of Wilson programs comes from strong support and alignment throughout the system. "District goals and classroom work are fully aligned," Ruth states. "No one is working in isolation."

From the central office and school board to principals, teachers, and parents—all are committed to making sure that students at all levels learn to read and continue to improve.

Ruth gives much of the credit for the Wilson program success to the work of Nora Centeno, YISD Dyslexia Program Coordinator and—as of this year—Wilson In-District

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Facilitator Maria Hernández prepares for Foundations implementation

TRUESDELL EDUCATION CAMPUS: A RISING STAR IN WASHINGTON, DC

Urban School Successfully Implements Foundations® and Just Words® with Facilitator's Support

The Truesdell Education Campus (pre-K–8) in Washington, DC, was awarded the 2010 Fight for Children's Quality Schools Initiative Rising Star award. This accomplishment is a testament to its ability to overcome the serious obstacles facing our inner-city schools. As part of the honor, Truesdell received a large grant, some of which it is using to train and support teachers in the Wilson Reading System® (WRS), Foundations, and Just Words.

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The Decoder

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Dear Friends,

Implementation Science is still very much on our minds. In the last issue (Spring 2011), we featured the work of Dr. Dean Fixsen, renowned author and researcher in the field; in this issue we summarize a keynote address given at the 2011 Wilson Leadership Conference by Dr. Fixsen's colleague, Dr. Michelle Duda. She did a terrific job laying out the organizing principles that program-developing organizations (such as Wilson) and districts should follow in the implementation process.



We celebrate implementation practices in our two cover articles: one on Ysleta, Texas and the other on the Truesdell Education Campus in Washington, DC. We also celebrate the incredible achievements of students, teachers, and administrators throughout the issue.

Several articles were "aided and abetted" by our Wilson Literacy Specialists. We'd like to recognize Lynn Mulrooney for sharing the Ysleta story (page 1) and Barbara McDonald and Trish Robinson for incisive interviews on the Truesdell campus (page 1) and West Babylon (page 4), respectively. Thank you as well to Bonnie O'Shields and Shari Barr, each of whom submitted the work of a trainee's student (page 8). We are also grateful to Kathy Jones for providing a helpful Skill Review (page 7) for our Just Words teachers and to Susan Tramaglini (page 11) for allowing us to highlight her role as a Literacy Specialist. Finally, we send many thanks to all the Wilson trainers, in-district trainers, and partners for their invaluable contributions to this issue.

We imagine each of you could tell us about an inspiring success story; the interesting and challenging work being done by teachers, schools, and districts; or organizational or logistical tips that might help all of us. So to all of our readers—if you know about, or are part of, a great story, please send it our way. ☞

Sincerely,

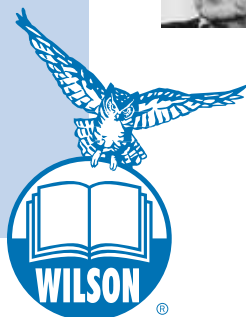
Barbara and Ed Wilson

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. William Jay Brown, Jr.



One of our beloved authors, Dr. William Jay Brown, Jr., passed away on May 23, 2011. He wrote a series of books, published by Wilson Language Training, to help educate adolescent and adult struggling readers. For almost 20 years, *Stories for Older Students* and *Travels with Ted* have helped thousands of new readers succeed. Dr. Brown's legacy will shine through those who were touched by his passion for literacy. ☞



FINALIST FOR URBAN EDUCATION AWARD: YSLETA (TEXAS) INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Ysleta's Wilson Implementation at a Glance

- All 58 campuses implement WRS (2–12)
- 35 of 37 elementary schools implement Foundations K–3 (Tiers 1, 2, or both)
- Three Foundations Coaching Sites
- Nora Centeno, YISD Dyslexia Program Coordinator, Wilson In-District Trainer, Foundations and Just Words Presenter
- Additional Foundations Presenters (also Dyslexia and WRS Level I Certified teachers): Micaela Cardona, and Irma Macias
- Foundations Facilitators: Dolores Gamboa, Maria Hernández, and Josie Rocha
- 19 WRS Level I Certified teachers
- 5 WRS Level II Certified teachers
- Ruth Stern, Wilson Sr. Literacy Advisor
- Lynn Mulrooney, Wilson Literacy Specialist

Trainer and Foundations® and Just Words® Presenter. “Nora is a very strong, hands-on leader, an excellent trainer who knows the teachers and is highly responsive to their needs. Because of her credibility, she can accomplish a lot—from obtaining support from the school board to collecting and keeping track of data.”

“All of our campuses have a Dyslexia Reading Teacher who implements the Wilson Reading System® in grades 2–12 to more than 900 students identified with dyslexia characteristics,” says Nora. “To build student success we provide teachers with follow-up training, coaching, and monitoring of the program.”

Foundations is implemented by K–3 teachers in 35 schools (see box above). Their significant training and coaching resulted in develop-



Principal Rosa Luján (center)
and the teachers of Presa Elementary

ing three Presenters and identifying three schools as Coaching Sites, each of which has a Facilitator.

The Facilitators assist teachers with scheduling, materials, and general questions. They participated in coaching visits at the Coaching Sites and modeled, co-taught, and observed lessons under the guidance of Lynn Mulrooney, Wilson Literacy Specialist.

“The Foundations Facilitators helped lead teacher study groups and joined me in coaching visits to learn how to continue to support teachers in implementing Foundations with fidelity,” explained Lynn.

“The study groups enabled teachers to collaborate on lesson planning and support each other throughout the adoption of the program.”

According to Lynn, the study groups also allowed teachers to brainstorm instructional strategies and identify student progress and outcomes in their classrooms. Having Facilitators model parts of lessons and give tips on how to support each other through study groups helped provide teacher comfort and success with the program.

Nora adds, “The state test for K–2 students, Texas Primary Reading Inventory, has shown a yearly increase of scores in the campuses that have implemented Foundations with fidelity, ensured by the dedication of our Presenters and Facilitators.”

“Ysleta is well on its way to not only address reading failure but also the *prevention* of reading issues,” explains Lynn. “Quality professional development in the district is intensive, ongoing, and strongly correlated to student gain. The teachers and administrators are passionate about providing Wilson programs with fidelity. This district truly understands the connection between student gain and the fidelity/sustainability of high quality teacher training.”

Ysleta's Student Population

HISPANIC	91.88%
WHITE	5.06%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	2.27%
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	80.91%
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT	23.90%

YSLETA: ONE OF FOUR FINALISTS FOR THE NATIONAL BROAD PRIZE

The Broad Prize for Urban Education is a national award honoring large urban school districts that demonstrate the best overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among poor and minority students.

- Ysleta outperformed all other Texas districts that serve similar student populations in reading and math.
- In 2009, 88% of Ysleta's seniors participated in the SAT exam—the highest participation rate of the 100 districts eligible for the Broad Prize.

GRADUAL IMPLEMENTATION PROVIDES CONSISTENCY, BUY-IN, AND SUPPORT

West Babylon Union Free School District (NY)

West Babylon Union Free School District (West Babylon, Long Island, NY) is taking a gradual approach to adopting Foundations® in its five elementary schools. While four schools implement one level of Foundations, one school pilots the next level. *The Decoder* discussed this approach, among other topics, with Carol Varsalona, Director of Language Arts and Testing, and Wilson Literacy Specialist Patricia (Trish) Robinson, who supports the district.

Decoder Newsletter: Last year, you introduced Foundations Level K and this year you'll introduce Level I, with the JFK school always piloting the next Level. Why did you adopt this strategy?

Carol Varsalona: *The district administrative team thought that the gradual introduction model would provide us with consistency across one grade level, and the ability to implement, observe, supervise, and advise K teachers so that we could reflect on the benefits of the program.*

The best form of participation is from the grassroots level. We knew that teachers would feel more comfortable with a gradual roll-out. Teacher buy-in and ongoing professional development are critical elements in the introduction of any new instructional program. Teachers have commented mid-stream and at the end of the year about the progress they have seen compared to the progress last year without Foundations. Data review is essential in informing instruction so careful review of the unit tests was important to us.

DN: Trish, after you taught Foundations workshops, how did you structure the initial coaching visits?

Trish Robinson: *For the first coaching visit, I modeled a Foundations lesson, which helped teachers get to know me. For the second visit, with the principals' buy-in, I asked them to do the lesson so I could give feedback. We ended each visit with a study group. In the first one, I asked the teachers to write a lesson, and I did it too—with the Lesson Plan Builder—so we could compare results.*

DN: Carol, can you talk a little about the debrief sessions you organized at the end of the first set of coaching visits last year?

CV: *It was important for administrators to discuss the model with each other and with a trained coach—it gave us a common ground. They reflected on what was going well with the program in their buildings, the commonalities across the district, and how they could continue to support the program. The principals were also introduced to the Principal Walk-Through checklist which they could use when observing Foundations classes.*



Forest Avenue Elementary kindergartners Domenic and Aniya enjoy a Make It Fun double dose activity

DN: Trish, in addition to the debrief sessions, how much do you work with administrators?

TR: *In my recent Level I workshop, a few principals and Carol Varsalona were there the whole day. It's very helpful when administrators know what's going on. The other keys to West Babylon's successful implementation are the teachers' knowledge base (37 Wilson Level I Certified teachers provide a great foundation) and the district's strategy of gradual implementation. Also, I've never heard the word fidelity more times! They just said it all the time—do it right for the kids!* ☺

JAKUB AND WORDLY WILSON TACKLE READING ONE "SUBSTEP" AT A TIME

In 2011, fifth grader Jakub Pela created the superhero "Wordly Wilson," a caped crusader who teaches people to read. In fact, his motto is "Wordly Wilson to the reading rescue—he can teach reading to anyone, anywhere, any season!" Wordly Wilson's colorful cape and mask are made from WRS word cards—as are the skyscrapers he's soaring over (each building represents a WRS step). Jakub, with the help of Wordly Wilson and his teacher Karen Pagni, has completed WRS Step 4. Onward and upward, Jakub! ☺



Above: Wordly Wilson leaps effortlessly over even the most challenging substeps. Left: Jakub and his teacher Karen can't help but smile at the reading progress they've made.

TRUESDELL EDUCATION CAMPUS: A RISING STAR IN WASHINGTON, DC

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Implementation Begins

A few years ago, Truesdell piloted WRS with 20 struggling students. Because these students made between eight months and 2.5 years of progress in one year, Truesdell adopted WRS for its low-level readers. In 2010, it implemented Foundations® in all K–2 classrooms and Just Words® in grades 4–8.

Truesdell became a Coaching Site for the DC Public Schools, with Steve Aupperle, the school's WRS Level I Certified Instructional Coach, becoming the Foundations and Just Words Facilitator. Barbara McDonald was the Wilson Literacy Specialist.

For each of Truesdell's coaching day visits, Barbara and Steve met with several different groups in one day. The two met beforehand to review the schedule and discuss topics that needed addressing. "For Foundations, we scheduled classroom visits back to back and visit debriefs during teacher planning times," explains Steve. "Just Words teachers collaborated with other teachers to find coverage for their debrief meeting."

During the coaching visits, Barbara modeled, co-taught, and observed lessons with Steve at her side. "Watching so many different lessons showed me programmatic strengths and difficulties," explains Steve. "I could see where I had to put in more guidance and support." The coaching visits were followed by debriefs in which Barbara addressed teacher questions, reviewed her observations, looked at upcoming units, and offered instructional tips.

Principal Mary Ann Stinson attended several of the coaching visits, and used the Foundations Principal Walk-Through checklist to monitor progress in the classrooms. "As the building principal, having the opportunity to implement the Wilson programs school-wide answered my quest for tiered intervention," says Ms. Stinson. "Knowing I had a staff that would implement the program with fidelity and a coach who could fully support the staff gave me the confidence that we will bring students up to grade level in reading and beyond."

Ongoing Support

Between coaching visits, Steve provided teachers with supplemental teaching aids from Wilson Academy® and gathered teaching supplies

so teachers wouldn't have to spend their planning periods collecting materials. He also facilitated study groups to prepare for upcoming units and was encouraged by teachers who took over leadership of those groups.

According to Barbara, "Steve's grasp of instructional components and his dedication to teacher support played a large part in Truesdell's implementation success. Whether modeling lessons between coaching visits, collecting data, or scheduling and grouping Just Words classes, Steve was always available to help." Principal Stinson agrees. "Steve was tenacious in ensuring the successful implementation of the program at all levels, as well as supporting the teachers and collecting and analyzing data."


Teachers and Students Show Progress

With Barbara and Steve's training and support, teachers are faithfully and enthusiastically implementing the key components of Foundations and Just Words. According to Steve, "When teachers really began to implement the program with fidelity, they saw amazing progress."

Particularly heartening were the improved reading scores of 5th–7th graders who were initially reading at a first grade level. "One student in a Just Words class experienced 3.6 years of growth and caught up to a fifth grade level," explains Steve. "A

Foundations class went from one advanced student in reading to seven advanced students. All below-level students made progress as well."

Students love the programs. "The younger ones say, 'Oh good, it's Foundations!'" says Steve. "The older children respond just as positively to Just Words, but of course they're less vocal."

This year, Steve became a Foundations and Just Words Presenter, delivering workshops for both programs while continuing to support Truesdell's teachers. "I am so excited to work with kids who didn't know their letter sounds, and now they do. They didn't know how to sound out words, and now they do. These kids have a new feeling of confidence that's a joy to see." 

Editor's Note: To learn more about Truesdell Education Campus and the Fight for Children's 2010 Quality Schools Initiative award, visit www.fightforchildren.org/QSI/truesdell_education_campus2.html



Facilitator Steve Aupperle (right) discusses word structure with teachers Brenda Watkins (middle) and Mike Mueller (left)

SUPPORTING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: APPLYING IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE TO LITERACY PROGRAMS

Combining Evidence-Based Wilson Programs with Evidence-Based Implementation Practices

Ten years ago, few students brought cell phones to school. September 11, 2001 and the profusion of social media turned the trickle into a deluge. Schools and districts could not ignore the change; they did have to manage it—with new policies and practices.

Any time you introduce a new behavior or program—whether monitoring cell phone use or implementing Wilson reading programs—you create a cultural shift. How the shift is managed makes all the difference. At the June 2011 Wilson Leadership Conference, Dr. Michelle Duda, Associate Director of the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), gave a keynote address, “Implementation Science: Moving from Adoption to Sustainability,” in which she presented the elements needed to successfully manage the implementation of a new program. (Dr. Duda is also a Research Scientist at the University of North Carolina and a State Coordinator for the Center for State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices, or SISEP.)

The driving principle is that Implementation Science is a platform to help a program become sustainable over time. According to Dr. Duda, “We know what works, so how do we perform the cultural shift necessary for students to benefit from the adopted intervention?”

In the previous issue of *The Decoder* (Spring 2011) we explored Implementation Science and its applicability to implementing Wilson programs. The lead article summarized the basic principles of this field, as outlined by Dr. Dean Fixsen and his colleagues in the monograph, *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature* (2005).

Dr. Duda, one of Dr. Fixsen’s colleagues, delved into similar territory. She organized her talk into *the What, the Who, and the How* of implementation. Simply put, *What* is the program being implemented, *Who* is the implementation team, and *How* is the implementation process. This article provides a summary.

The What of Implementation

In our case, *the What* is the adoption of Wilson research-based programs: Wilson Reading System®, Foundations®, and Just Words®. The core implementation components are the selection, training, and coaching of teachers so that the programs are taught with fidelity. To that end, Wilson partners with schools and districts in going through



Ed and Barbara Wilson with Michelle Duda (right) at the Wilson Leadership Conference

the COMPASS (COMprehensive Plans to Achieve Success and Sustainability) process, in which an implementation plan is developed for the upcoming academic year.

But *the What* is also the breakdown of each critical component of the program’s implementation. Key components include scheduling, materials and logistics, funding, parent/teacher/administration involvement, teacher change-over, and so on. Dr. Duda’s dictum for handling each critical component is simple: Pay Now or Pay Later. And what brings the best results? Pay Now.

Dr. Duda provided a chart that would be a useful tool for districts to use as they prepare to implement a new program. For each critical component, the ideal implementation is described, with acceptable and unacceptable variations enumerated. For example, here is the start of a chart for scheduling Foundations.

Dr. Duda provided a chart that would be a useful tool for districts to use as they prepare to implement a new program. For each critical component, the ideal implementation is described, with acceptable and unacceptable variations enumerated. For example, here is the start of a chart for scheduling Foundations.

CRITICAL COMPONENT	IDEAL IMPLEMENTATION	ACCEPTABLE VARIATION	UNACCEPTABLE VARIATION
Scheduling Foundations in the general classroom (Tier 1)	30–35 minutes, 5 days per week, in the morning	30 minutes, 5 days per week	Less than 5 days per week, less than 30 minutes, end of day, omission of any activities in the lesson plan
Scheduling Foundations double dose classes (Tier 2)	30 additional minutes, 5 days per week	30 additional minutes, 3–4 days per week	Less than 30 minutes, less than 3 days per week

Creating such charts facilitates discussions on best practices and the resolution of any issues or problems.

The Who of Implementation

Implementation teams consist of the organization that developed the program and the schools and districts that adopt and implement the program. In our case, the former consists of Wilson Language Training; its Literacy Specialists who train, coach, and certify teachers; and its Literacy Advisors and executive staff who work with districts to develop COMPASS (comprehensive plans). The latter consists of all school and district staff involved in implementation, which might include teachers; reading and intervention specialists; program coordinators; principals; and reading program, RTI, and special education administrators.

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SUPPORTING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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The How of Implementation

In this section, Dr. Duda focused on the Implementation triangle that we presented in *The Decoder* Spring 2011 issue.



Full implementation requires working all three sides of the triangle. We offer a brief recap here:

- **Staff Competence:** Selecting and training staff is insufficient for gaining expertise; coaching in the classroom is mandatory for achieving fidelity.
- **Organizational Supports:** Administrators need to be involved. Attending some of the training and coaching sessions will give them on-the-ground knowledge of implementation requirements.

A key role of the administration is to align policies to practices. Administrators can create a supportive environment by championing the work of staff, facilitating new practices and modifying old ones, and removing roadblocks to effective implementation. For example, when data is collected, is the administration ensuring that data is accessible to all who need it? Is the data being used to help make decisions?

- **Leadership:** Leadership is responsible for “taking the lead” in overcoming obstacles to change. While district leaders are typically removed from the everyday implementation of a program, their role is crucial in handling two types of issues: technical and adaptive. Technical issues are the “easy” ones—everyone agrees on what’s needed (e.g., more computers), and the solution is relatively clear. Adaptive challenges are thornier—there may be legitimate but competing perspectives on defining the challenge and/or the solution and one decision may have a ripple effect on other practices.

On Sustainability

Implementation takes time—according to Dr. Duda, typically two to four years to full implementation. Progress is both forward moving

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SKILL REVIEW: TRACKING STUDENT MASTERY IN JUST WORDS®

By Kathy Jones, Wilson Literacy Specialist

At the end of each Just Words Unit, a test is given to measure concept mastery. By revealing strengths and weaknesses, the results aid lesson planning.

When Unit Test results indicate that some students have not achieved 80% mastery, teachers should provide opportunities for additional support, such as pairing struggling students with stronger students and allowing them to complete assignments together. Teachers can also review concepts in before/after school study groups.


Bringing the Classroom Alive

Teachers should use Just Words-related tasks to keep their classes engaged during the individual conferences that take place following the Unit Test. These activities reinforce concepts and encourage cooperative learning:



While the teacher meets with individual students, others pair up for a Just Words activity

- Provide word cards and high frequency word cards to student pairs. Have them flash the cards to each other.
- Write vocabulary words on the board. Students write sentences using each word and then share them with a partner who checks for spelling.
- Partners orally read a Challenge Book story, each reading alternate sentences fluently. Students then read the story in unison with inflection and expression.

- Student pairs time each other while reading the phrase pages from the Student Challenge Book.
- Give students a list of words that contains one correct spelling and one wrong spelling for each word. Students identify the correct spelling, find the word in a dictionary, and report the page and quadrant where found. 

Editor’s note: Expert tips such as this one are added monthly to the Wilson Academy® / Intervention Learning Community. They are also added monthly to the Prevention / Early Intervention (Foundations®) and Intensive (WRS) Learning Communities.

DIGRAPHS STAR IN LEE'S MAGNIFICENT DREAM

By Lee Scott Anderson, Grade 5
Ely Elementary School, Elyria, OH


Late at night I had a crazy dream. My dream was about me graduating from college. I walked up a flight of stairs to turn around on a huge stage. I was wearing a blue and white robe. My principal handed my diploma.

I turned around to look at the audience, and they were letter tiles! My mom was Ch. My Wilson teacher was old, and my sister was F.K. Mrs. Barr was in and she was writing on paper! She was my grandma and she was clapping.

Next, I ran behind the red curtain with enthusiasm. I was excited and scared. What a crazy dream!

ME AND MY OWL

By Demetrius Brown,
Grade 3, Martin Luther King, Jr.
Elementary School, Washington, DC

In my classroom, I have an owl. It's not a real owl, but a stuffed owl. It was a gift for learning our sounds by Foundations. We learn all of our vowel and consonant sounds, plus digraphs and other combinations. We also have another owl named Baby Echo. I like this owl because it gives me care and love, as it helps me learn. 



Lee's teacher Ms. Getty (with him at right) inspires him to dream big (illustration at left)

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS IN HAND

Pocono Mountain (PA) Students Now College Bound

Last June, students from East Junior High and East High School (Swiftwater, PA) celebrated the completion of Wilson Reading System®—a huge accomplishment! Students were instructed in the upper steps of the Wilson program by Jo Anne Chambers, a reading specialist for the Pocono Mountain School District and a Wilson In-District trainer, and Jamie Schweppenheiser, a special education teacher.

"Many of these students realized in kindergarten that reading was hard for them," explains Jo Anne. "They come with years of frustration because they had not been successful in school."




Pocono Mountain School District's 2011 WRS graduates

Both teachers worked on creating a safe, non-pressure, respectful environment, crucial for older students. Jo Anne says, "I tell them, 'You have a right to feel safe in my classroom; no one will ever embarrass you.' I also tell them,

'This is a very intense program; it is not for the weak at heart. But if you work as hard as I do, you'll know more about the English language than most students who graduate from our high school!'"

In the beginning, some students couldn't read a closed syllable. But after working steadily for 45 minutes a day, five days a week for several years, many have plans for college and careers. Jo Anne relayed comments from several students. Joe Torres said at graduation, "Before Wilson, I was illiterate. It seemed as if no one cared that I couldn't read. Now, colleges are looking for me." Another student, Adam, said, "I used to think that everyone else was smarter than me when I was younger.

Now I bet I am better at reading curriculum words than everyone else!" According to Gregory, "Wilson gave me hope. When I first began the class, I realized that I wasn't alone. We were all in it together." Robbie puts it succinctly: "I now believe in myself!" 

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM HER FRIENDS

Brittany Makes Positive Changes with Tutor and Mentor's Support through WRS

By Marla McGhee

One special young lady has gone from severe attendance issues and thoughts of dropping out to excellent attendance and plans of attending college, thanks to her own efforts and a special grant-funded program.

In the fall of 2010, I met a 14-year-old who didn't see much of a future for herself. Meeting with low academic success despite an IEP (individualized education program), Brittany missed 45 days of middle school. She often found herself on probation, mostly for truancy. Luckily for her, the juvenile court system suggested that she attend the Juvenile Court Grant Project in Gainesville, Georgia, which included Wilson Reading System® tutoring, to help her make positive changes.

System of Care Grant Program

In 2010, Hall County, which includes Gainesville, received a grant from the Governor's Office for Children and Families. The grant creates a "system of care" that provides literacy, mentoring, and educational assistance to students with truancy and behavioral problems. As part of the grant, several educators received WRS training under Wilson Partner Ava White to assist referred students with their reading.

When I began working with Brittany, I realized she was a highly motivated student. The tutor helped her become a more confident reader and speller. She also developed social and academic skills with a mentor funded by the grant. Brittany received important support from her North Hall Middle School teacher, Amy Chosewood, and her counselor, Rena McAlister, who coordinated communications between all of us.

Since graduating from middle school last spring, Brittany moved many times and we lost contact. However,

we were recently able to reconnect. Brittany and I are both very happy that we will now be able to continue her tutoring at the group home where she is in foster care. ☞

DETERMINATION AND PASSION RESULT IN "YES I CAN" AWARD



Wilson Trainer Jennifer Atseff met Nora Davidauskas as a second grader in the Naperville Community School District, Illinois. Nora was looking at the school's 'Accelerated Reader' bulletin board when Jennifer approached her and asked if her name was on the board. Nora's reply? "No, I can't read." Jennifer then asked, "If there were a way to put you up there, would you be interested?" And that's all it took.... Five years later, Nora completed Step 12 of the Wilson Reading System® and has had her name on the board numerous times.

In addition to this major accomplishment, Nora has a passion for helping others with their reading challenges. She has lobbied state lawmakers to support vital literacy programs, and she speaks to various organizations on behalf of Learning Ally (formerly Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic) as an advocate for assistive technology. "She is so likeable and friendly; people are drawn to her and relate to her. They realize that they (RFB&D) aren't only helping blind veterans anymore (their original mission), they're also helping vibrant, young students!" said Jennifer.

Nora received the Council for Exceptional Children "Yes I Can" Award in April in the self-advocacy category. "Nora is a very determined young lady. She sets high goals for herself, and I'm eager to see what she does in the future," reports Jennifer. ☞

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Literacy Beyond 3rd Grade: Getting Adolescents College and Career Ready 62nd International Dyslexia Association (IDA) Conference, Chicago November 10, 2:00-4:00

Linda Wernikoff, Wilson Senior Education Advisor, hosted this panel on the components needed to deliver an effective adolescent literacy program in grades 4-12. The panelists were Dr. Timothy Shanahan, Professor at the University of Illinois and Director of the Center for Literacy; Barbara Wilson, author and co-founder of Wilson Language Training; Joan Sedita, author and founding partner of Keys to Literacy; and Demetra Kontoulis, Reading Instructor, Pittsburgh Public Schools—Special Education. ☞



LITERACY ON THE MARCH

Since formal certification in the Wilson Reading System® began in 1989, more than 14,000 teachers from 48 states across the country have completed Level I Certification. ☞



AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

The 2011 recipient of the **Mary Ann Bonneau Administrator Award** is Margaret (Meg) E. Kursonis of Worcester, Massachusetts. Meg has been headmaster of St. Peter Central Catholic Elementary School (SPCC), a pre-K-8 school with 378 students, since 1998. A 1967 graduate of SPCC, she later returned to develop their successful preschool program and teach kindergarten.

In the early nineties, Meg earned her Wilson Reading System® Level I Certification and later taught Foundations®. Today, she works closely with SPCC Reading Specialist and Wilson Literacy Team Leader Robin Carlo. Together, they guarantee that SPCC's teachers receive appropriate training and support in all Wilson® programs.



Literacy champion: Meg takes time from her busy schedule to read with first graders

As SPCC's sole administrator, Meg wears many hats. She's responsible for curriculum renewal, faculty and staff development, obtaining funds, new learning initiatives, and maintaining good family and community relations. She's also an avid fundraiser, a respected guidance counselor, and even a much-loved substitute teacher.

Meg is a tireless champion of her school and its mission, and her enthusiasm sets the tone at SPCC. Guests are quick to comment on the school's inviting atmosphere and friendly faculty. SPCC was the first Wilson Coaching Site. Meg opened the door to the school's many visitors—warmly welcoming them and proudly watching her students shine. ☞

The Mary Ann Bonneau Administrator Award is presented annually by Wilson Language Training to a school administrator who demonstrates leadership, hard work, and dedication to the Wilson mission of achieving literacy for all students. This award honors the memory of Mary Ann Bonneau and her commitment to helping children with disabilities.

WILSON LITERACY SPECIALIST IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Susan Tramaglino



Profile: Susan has taught in New Jersey public and private schools since 1975 as an English teacher, special education teacher, and reading specialist. She has taught everyone from fourth graders to graduate students. Susan has also served as President of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), New Jersey chapter. She has been with Wilson Language Training since 1994,

as a trainer, then lead trainer, and as a Literacy Specialist. She holds an M.A. in Reading from Montclair State University, and lives in Long Valley.

My IDA experience: Has put me in contact with inspirational leaders in the field of reading. Directing an adult literacy program sponsored by IDA at County College of Morris for 10 years was a life-changing experience. Our clients wanted to read stories to their grandchildren, write notes to their child's teacher, advance in their jobs. I keep a bandana given to me as a gift tied to the mirror of my car to inspire me when I feel too tired to keep working.

Being an LS is rewarding because: I have the opportunity to work with many wonderful school districts and their devoted teachers.

I feel honored to observe everyday triumphs. Last school year in Lakewood, NJ, a student was eager to tell me that because of Wilson she was able to stand in front of her church congregation and read an excerpt from the bible aloud. The faces of the student and teacher beaming with pride made me thankful to have this great job!

My typical workday involves: On any given day I may be presenting, training, conferencing, problem-solving, coaching, modeling or observing. I embrace the fact that there is no "typical day." I love the diversity of my job. I am also grateful for the team spirit at Wilson and enjoy opportunities to interact with colleagues in the field and at the office.

I love: A good joke, a good book, and a good ski trail.

Best read this summer: *Mister Pip*, by Lloyd Jones. It reminded me of the joy of discovering literature and how much of an impact teaching can have on the lives of all children. It spoke of the fragility of life and reminded me to be grateful for the blessings of each day.

My favorite role is: Playing Grandma to one-year-old Keith. His laughter is the best sound in the universe! ☞

SUPPORTING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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and cyclical. It moves forward through training, coaching, and so on; as the process repeats over the course of years, refinements are made and fidelity deepens.

Dr. Duda also mentioned that sustainability needs to be built into the implementation process from Day 1. We sometimes consider it a separate stage of implementation, such as the development of In-District trainers to take over training and coaching Wilson teachers. She stresses that true sustainability begins with the initial teacher selection and administration support, and continues through the improvement cycles which carry into the future.

We close with a quote from Dr. Duda's presentation: "The only thing worse than failing and not knowing why you failed, is succeeding and not knowing why you succeeded" (Jane Timmons-Mitchell). With Implementation Science, educators now have a framework for *knowingly* adopting and sustaining evidence-based programs. ☞

For more information about Implementation Science, see www.scalingup.org. If you register, you gain access to supplemental resources in the Resources tab.

www.wilsonlanguage.com



THE 2011 MARGARET BYRD RAWSON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Nancy Hennessy, M.Ed., Recognized for Furthering the Mission of the IDA

Congratulations to Nancy Hennessy, recipient of the 2011 Margaret Byrd Rawson Lifetime Achievement Award! The award was presented on Friday, November 11 at the 62nd Annual IDA Conference.

Nancy Hennessy is an educational consultant and past president of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). An experienced teacher, diagnostician, administrator, and author, she is also fondly remembered at Wilson as a talented and energetic Wilson Trainer. Nancy has published many articles and chapters on dyslexia-related topics and continues to deliver countless keynote addresses, workshops, and trainings to national and international audiences. ☞

WILSON ACADEMY® INTRODUCES THE *PREVENTION / EARLY INTERVENTION LEARNING COMMUNITY* FOR FOUNDATIONS®



In July 2010 we launched our upgraded Wilson Academy®, home to the **Intervention Learning Community** for Just Words®, and the **Intensive Learning Community** for the Wilson Reading System®. We are pleased to announce that we have brought our entire family of online Learning Communities under one roof with the addition of the **Prevention Learning Community for Foundations®!** Our goal is to bring you additional resources and information to enhance your Foundations instruction to include Progress Monitoring tools, printable materials, monthly Expert Tips by Wilson Literacy Specialists, a discussion board, and ongoing updates.

A one-year membership is included with the purchase of a Foundations Teacher's Manual; a three-month membership is provided to individuals upon completion of a Foundations Level workshop.

To self-register using an access code or to renew your community membership, please go to: www.wilsonlanguage.com/register. Access codes are provided by your administrator or Wilson trainer for on-site professional development, or with your Foundations Teacher's Manual.

We hope you find Wilson Academy to be *your* place for online professional development and support! 

The Decoder

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