

THE Decoder

THE VOICE OF THE WILSON COMMUNITY



RESOURCES FOR AN EVOLVING EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

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The Decoder is published by Wilson Language Training, a leader in multisensory structured language instruction, dedicated to providing educators with the resources needed to help students become fluent, independent readers.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Following widespread school closures this spring due to COVID-19, Wilson’s mission of providing educators with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to effectively teach emerging and struggling readers intensified as we shifted gears and entered a new reality of virtual instruction and remote learning. While the setting of your instruction and student learning may vary across the country this year, we’re committed to maintaining that momentum to support you and your students.



The road to this point has been paved with unknowns. As we posted additional resources back in the spring to help carry teachers through the semester, we hoped the modified educational landscape would be short-lived. However, it quickly became apparent that spring’s uncertainty would continue indefinitely. Recognizing the urgency of the situation for teachers and students alike, we dove into the development and expansion of tools and resources to support instruction during this unpredictable school year. The outcome was the development of the FUN HUB™, a virtual resource hub for Foundations® educators; Virtual Launch Workshops for Foundations and Just Words®; and online versions of Wilson Reading System® (WRS) courses.

We’re incredibly proud of these accomplishments because of the impact they’ll have for students learning at home this year—and for the dedicated teachers doing their best to make that happen.

As we all continue the critical work of supporting reading acquisition, you’ll find this issue of *The Decoder* details our new tools and offerings for remote instruction, provides an update about earning and tracking your WRS professional credits, and reintroduces the pairing of Foundations and *Geodes*® readables from our partnership with Great Minds®.

You’ll also meet the Rowley family and WRS alumni Adam, Ben, and Jayden, and learn that resilience is not inherited, but rather a trait developed over time. Likewise, Pat Shafer, founder of On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic, reminds us what sheer determination looks like in action. Educators, like the newly certified Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioners in Skaneateles, NY, demonstrate commitment and dedication to students to meet the challenges of virtual instruction.

We are encouraged by the dedication and resilience of the Wilson community. During this school year, there will be many triumphs worth celebrating—much like those you’ll encounter throughout the following pages of *The Decoder*.

Sincerely,

Barbara & Ed Wilson

On the Cover

Wilson supports students and teachers with resources for remote and blended instruction.

Share how Wilson works!

Submit your letters, pictures, or articles to be considered for publication in **The Decoder**.

email:

stories@wilsonlanguage.com
or mail to the WLT Program Development Department at the address below.

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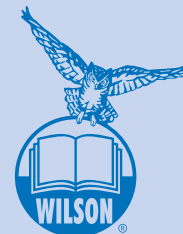
WILSON LANGUAGE TRAINING

47 OLD WEBSTER ROAD
OXFORD, MA 01540

800.899.8454

www.wilsonlanguage.com

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RESOURCES FOR AN EVOLVING EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

Whether Teaching Remotely or in the Classroom, Wilson® Is Here For You

When COVID-19 shook the education world this spring, Foundations®, Just Words®, and Wilson Reading System® teachers had to reimagine their instruction and were whipped into something called “remote learning,” many with only a day’s notice.

At the time, the Wilson® teams quickly responded with resource pages for remote learning for what we had hoped would be a brief shutdown, and also focused on ensuring the spring professional learning courses could continue in a virtual model. However, when May came, we realized, “This uncertainty is likely to go into the next school year... we need to be sure we are ready to support teachers and students if remote and blended models continue.”

Through close collaboration with school districts of all sizes, survey feedback from approximately 1,000 educators, volunteer educators who piloted our virtual courses, and insights gained during the spring closures, we have added and expanded resources to support instruction in remote and hybrid learning environments as well as professional learning.

“Our country’s educators have all they can do to navigate the school year,” explains Wilson Co-founder and Author Barbara Wilson. “We set a goal to provide teachers with tools and resources to ease the stress of preparing for remote delivery so they can continue to effectively focus on teaching critical reading and spelling skills. With the FUN HUB, we also aimed to provide caregivers with instructional videos as home support is pivotal in the current remote learning environment.”

From new resources to tried-and-true ones, our hope is that these tools and professional learning opportunities for the 2020-2021 school year will help teachers effectively continue their work with Wilson programs. Losing a year of providing critical foundational skills to both emerging and struggling readers is just not an option.

The FUN HUB™ is available to Foundations teachers at no additional cost for the 2020-2021 school year. Access is provided using the code in the Teacher’s Manual, with a learning community (PLC) membership, or with a code provided to the district. Go to hub.wilsonacademy.com

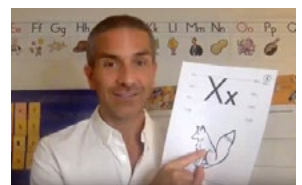
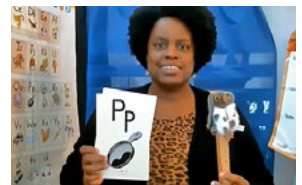


Program Resources

The Foundations Virtual Resource Hub, or FUN HUB™ for short, is a membership site specifically designed to support teachers with remote instruction. Unit videos and digital materials along with guidance and ideas for remote delivery are provided for each Foundations Level.

Our expert Literacy Specialists quickly learned how to record videos from their home offices to demonstrate each new word structure concept for every week for Levels K, 1, 2, and 3. These Introduce New Concept videos are excellent models for teachers. They can be shared with students for preteaching and re-teaching, and are helpful when students are absent from their teacher-led lesson.

The experts also brought to life the Home Support packets with Overview and Tip videos for each Unit. Finally, they videoed a targeted lesson for each week’s new concepts with the vision that many students may need additional support at this time. This video could be shown to a small group and facilitated by paraprofessionals. The experts also assembled additional practice worksheets for each week.



Available as part of the FUN HUB™ are the InterActivities Tools for Levels K, 1, 2, and 3. The tools provide digital materials for remote delivery of lesson activities, such as Sound Cards, a build words screen, flashcards, syllable and sentence frames, and more.

continued on next page

RESOURCES FOR AN EVOLVING EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

continued from page 3



The InterActivities Tool for Just Words® is not a new offering, but it certainly proved to be a valuable resource in the remote learning environment. In fact,

Fundations® and WRS teachers found it so helpful during spring closures that we have developed similar apps specific to those programs.

Just Words (JW) teachers should continue to check out the Remote Instruction button in the Intervention Learning Community for JW. We recently added a Guide for Delivering Just Words Activities Remotely and will continue to add resources.

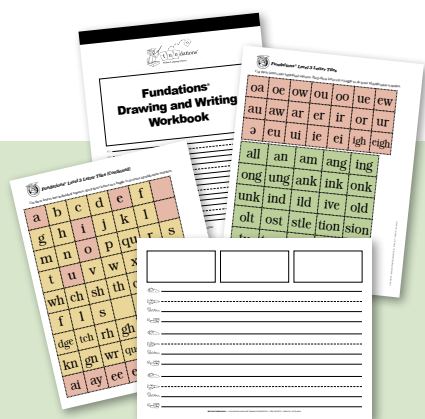
Wilson Reading System®



Just released is a new Wilson® Digital Cards tool. WRS teachers will now have a digital card tool that is specifically organized by WRS Step with Letter-Sound Cards, Syllable Cards, and word Element Cards (i.e., prefixes, suffixes, and Latin bases). This tool is

provided to members of the Intensive Learning Community for WRS at no additional charge for this school year.

Also, WRS teachers should check out resources under the Remote Instruction tab in the Learning Community, which includes the Steps 1-6 Passage Packets and Student Workbooks, online lesson checklist, resources template, video on conducting the WADE and End-of-Step Assessment remotely, and recommendations for conducting remote lessons.



Level 3 Packet

Whether in person or remote, ensuring that students use manipulatives remains KEY for multisensory application and practice! Ideally it would be best if students use their durable materials at home, particularly in a fully remote setting. However, recognizing that in a hybrid model that might not always be feasible, we put together a “low-tech” and inexpensive solution (\$3.50-\$3.90 per packet) that allows students to have a set of mock-up Fundations manipulatives for at-home use.

Tip: The Fundations® Level 3 At-Home Packet is appropriate for Just Words® and Wilson Reading System® students. Check it out at the online Wilson store.

Professional Learning in the Virtual World

Although our Literacy Specialists will not be able to visit with teachers in person this year, we will be there via the virtual world.

Fundations and Just Words Support

New Virtual Launch Workshops (instructor-led) for Just Words and all the Fundations Levels were developed with extensive participant input. (See PDSA article page 6.) These highly interactive remote workshops provide the practice and guidance needed to effectively begin teaching the Fundations or Just Words curricula and meet the prerequisite for the VIS program.

The Virtual Implementation Support (VIS) continues to expand across the country. The full-year program has been established for several years and is particularly helpful now that we are not coaching in person. More than 2,800 Fundations and Just Words teachers from 96 districts are engaging in live, interactive study sessions at critical junctures throughout this school year.

WRS Courses and Certifications

The WRS Introductory Course and WRS Advanced Strategies for MSL Group Instruction Course are both available virtually, and educators can continue to pursue WRS Certifications remotely through web-based practicums.



Many of our Wilson® Accredited Partners are also offering these courses remotely. Head to our 2020-2021 Teaching and Professional Learning Resources page for the most up-to-date information on upcoming opportunities. <https://tinyurl.com/WLT2020-21>

Educator Point of View: Wilson Reading System® is a Virtual Success in Skaneateles, NY

By Francine Grannell, M.Ed., W.C.T.

As a Wilson® Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.), I have supported dozens of teachers over the years as they pursued their Wilson Reading System® (WRS) Level I or Level II Certification and persevered through the inevitable challenges this undertaking entails in the best of times.

When the 2019-2020 school year began, our seven WRS Level I candidates immediately started seeing success with their practicum students and were excited about the deeper understanding of foundational reading skills they were gaining. They soaked it all in as both learner and teacher.

As we transitioned to remote learning following COVID-19 school closures this past spring, our candidates were unsure about how they would continue instruction with their practicum students, and their students and families were unsure how it would go too. We had several virtual implementation meetings as a group to support teachers in their transition to remote instruction, applying the guidance and resources Wilson quickly provided to educators.

Just as they had approached their first in-person WRS lessons with intention, care, and purpose, our teachers similarly approached their virtual lessons. Teachers and students started with small steps, and each day grew in confidence with the progress they were making.

Throughout the months of virtual instruction, I had the privilege of observing teachers and their students as part of the certification process.

When I say privilege, I truly mean this. I was amazed at the rigor of teaching and learning that was happening, and the high levels of student engagement, ownership, and discourse that were evidenced during lessons.

Five of our seven candidates earned their WRS Level I Certification this year, and the two remaining candidates are on track to complete the requirements in December with the extension Wilson has provided. Several are now pursuing WRS Level II training, and a new cohort of seven educators started WRS Level I training this year. The enthusiasm they have is energizing.

“My WRS Level I experience has been the most challenging yet fulfilling thing I’ve done in my entire 28-year teaching career, and that was even before COVID-19 appeared on the scene,” shared elementary school reading teacher Betsy Smith.

“Even through technology glitches, pets on screen, and younger siblings interrupting lessons, we kept going. I believe the bond between me and my practicum student, as well as her realization of her own growth over the year, kept us motivated. She was so proud of herself that it alleviated all of the worry on my part. I’m extraordinarily proud and grateful for this experience.”

Sue Raulli, a primary school reading teacher, shared a similar experience.

“Transitioning to remote learning during the COVID-19 crisis certainly required a growth mindset. I was surprised by how quickly my practicum student and I developed a routine to continue our Wilson lessons. We had a few epic fails at technology (mostly me), some laughs, and lots of learning for both of us as we progressed through the Steps. The feeling of accomplishment when we finished our practicum was amazing.”



Skaneateles reading teachers and their WRS Level I practicum students maintained their steady pace remotely this spring.

During these challenging and uncertain times, what we all crave is predictability and structure within our day. The explicit, systematic, and multisensory instruction within WRS provided comfort and familiarity to our teachers and students.

Additionally, Wilson’s guidance, suggestions, resources, and belief that we could continue our WRS Level I instruction remotely gave our district confidence to keep working with our practicum students to further their instruction and our teachers’ professional learning. Now, our newly trained teachers are applying their

WRS skills in person and remotely, depending on what families have selected for their children to experience this school year.

Through our experiences, we also learned the following: communicate regularly and often; stay organized and manage materials conducive to your new setting; collaborate to problem solve around specific questions and challenges; smile and breathe! 🌿

Francine Grannell, K-12 Humanities Curriculum Coordinator for the Skaneateles Central School District in New York, is a Wilson® Credentialed Trainer, and Foundations® and Just Words® Presenter. She began her Wilson journey in 2009 as a district-wide coach in the Syracuse City School District supporting K-12 special education teachers.

PLAN-DO-STUDY-ACT

Using a Continuous Cycle of Improvement to Guide the Launch of Wilson's New Virtual Workshops

Like so many things it has altered, COVID-19 immediately and radically changed the conditions of teaching and learning across the U.S. and around the world. Whether it was instruction for students in a classroom or teachers engaging in professional learning, each task had to be examined from the perspective of rapidly evolving needs and capabilities.

Tested by limitations on travel and in-person gatherings, we needed to shift our professional learning to a virtual format, tackling the challenge of ensuring that it would be as informative, engaging, and effective as our in-person training has been for three decades.

Understanding the value of implementation science, we applied those principles to the development of the Wilson Introductory Workshop and the Foundations® and Just Words® Virtual Launch Workshops, highly interactive remote versions of the programs' in-person introductory workshops.



In particular, we followed the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle, a commonly used improvement cycle process. With PDSA, an implementation team identifies a goal and outlines an approach to attain that goal, puts the plan into action, monitors the results, and then acts on those results to improve the goal or methods used.

In our case, the end goal was to provide virtual courses that met the same quality as our in-person ones while also modeling best practices for the virtual reality that COVID-19 imposed.

We have long offered both course and practicum components of WRS Level I and Level II Certification programs as online options, providing us a base of knowledge and experience around remote learning to work from. We also offer blended and professional learning opportunities for Foundations and Just Words through Virtual Implementation Support (VIS), which has been rolling out following a pilot implementation period. However, until now, the introductory workshops for these programs have always been delivered in person.

"The PDSA methodology provided a means to introduce, test, assess, and refine all aspects of a new workshop delivery system by adopting a trial and learn mentality," explains Senior Vice President of Higher Education, Research, and Policy Paul Tortolani, Ph.D. "Everything we learned and applied enabled us to improve subsequent workshops."

The "Plan" Phase

Before we launched the Virtual Launch Workshops, we planned. That process began with a number of pointed questions.

- What format, content, and logistical support is necessary in a virtual environment to effectively prepare teachers to begin to implement a program as designed?
- What changes are needed to ensure that our virtual workshops offer the same quality of instruction, group work, and level of engagement between trainers and participants as our in-person workshops?
- What changes are necessary in the communication processes and tools to encourage and reinforce a district's ownership of their new program or intervention?
- And finally, what lessons were learned from the PDSA process and rapid-cycle iterations, and how can we verify and document the teachable, learnable, doable, measurable, replicable, scalable, and sustainable aspects of the intervention?

Another part of planning involved research and data collection focused on determining educators' attitudes and preferences concerning professional learning experiences. During this phase, we surveyed teachers and administrators in large and small districts across the country.

The "Do" Phase

Then, in late May and June, more than 150 teachers helped pilot the Virtual Launch Workshops. The Wilson implementation team collaborated with an implementation team leader from each district, communicating directly and often about a range of topics from materials, to protocols, and workshop preparations. The Wilson implementation team also worked closely with school building administrators to encourage their participation



alongside teachers to better understand their new Wilson program and provide feedback from a different and valuable perspective.

During the pilot workshops, Wilson Trainers observed and provided feedback to participating teachers practicing the multisensory structured literacy methods. The participating teachers, in turn, shared their insights with us. Overwhelmingly, teachers were satisfied with the new format and outcomes.

"I loved being able to watch a Foundations® lesson in action, to hear the Trainer's wording, the teacher's role, the students' role, and to see how materials were used," said a Foundations Level 3 Virtual Launch participant from Connecticut.

The "Study" Phase

By listening intently to participant feedback, we were able to amplify areas participants found helpful and rework areas needing refinement. Each workshop went through two to three cycles of PDSA.

The "Act" Phase

As a result of this collaborative initiative, Foundations and Just Words® Virtual Launch Workshops have been scheduled for the duration of the 2020-2021 school year. We invite this year's workshop participants to share their experiences with us and become part of the ongoing PDSA cycle. ↻

WHY USE PDSA?

When adopting a new learning initiative or program, the **Plan-Do-Study-Act** cycle engages teams in an intentional, continuous succession of steps that show what's working, and the areas of improvement needed to quickly and efficiently reach the intended goal.

"With each cycle, implementation should be refined and communicated," Michelle A. Duda and Barbara Wilson write in the 2015 Literacy Nation White Paper, *Using Implementation Science to Close the Policy to Practice Gap*.

They go on to explain that "Documenting these cycles creates an institutional memory of decisions made and lessons learned that can be passed onto future stakeholders. It also informs stakeholders of the activities occurring and provides opportunities to solicit and incorporate their feedback.

"As a result, this process creates a supportive environment in which evidence-based programs and practices can thrive, builds a culture of trial and learning, and ensures that the supports in place are designed to improve student outcomes."

Read more at: <https://tinyurl.com/WLTUsingIS>

WILSON'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GLOBAL IMPLEMENTATION SOCIETY

With the realization that "students won't benefit from interventions they don't experience," Wilson began its efforts to apply the methods and practices of Implementation Science around 2010. Since that time, we have deeply embedded these strategies in all that we do.



A couple years ago, Wilson joined the newly formed Global Implementation Society (GIS), which "promotes the development and integration of effective implementation, improvement, and scaling practices in human service settings in order to improve outcomes for children, families, individuals, and communities worldwide."

Recently, two Wilson colleagues, Dr. Vicki Myers and Dr. Paul Tortolani, undertook a more active role in the GIS by participating in committee work to develop and publish the Competencies for Implementation Facilitators (www.globalimplementation.org). These competencies, or standards, describe the skills and knowledge needed to be effective at facilitating implementation of a program or service, whether a beginner, intermediate, or expert. They allow individuals to assess their level of preparation for implementation responsibilities, determine gaps in their preparation, and provide employers with insight into the skills necessary to implement new programs effectively and reliably.

The skills and knowledge these competencies reflect are highly applicable to teachers introducing a new program or new subject matter to students. The standards will be featured in several webinars this winter and during presentations at the upcoming 5th Global Implementation Conference (virtual) in May 2021. ↻

GEODES® CLASSROOM LIBRARIES PROVIDE MEANINGFUL PRACTICE FOR FOUNDATIONS® STUDENTS

Unlike traditional decodables, the *Geodes*® Classroom Libraries provide extensive reading practice with taught word structure while also building background knowledge on meaningful, compelling topics.

Geodes® is published by Great Minds® (greatminds.org) in collaboration with Wilson Language Training®. Organized into level-specific classroom libraries for K, 1, and 2, each *Geodes* Classroom Library offers content-rich books that follow the Foundations® scope and sequence while also aligning to the module topics in Great Minds' core English language arts curriculum, *Wit & Wisdom*®.

Geodes® libraries are a valuable addition to Foundations classrooms to support decoding and fluency practice with connected, authentic text during small- or whole-group reading, or during independent reading time for appropriate students.

The books are considered “readable” texts because students apply their knowledge of taught decoding patterns and high frequency trick words alongside direct instruction in vocabulary and content knowledge—just what budding readers need. Carefully selected vocabulary words are taught within the context of highly engaging subject matter to create authentic reading experiences about important topics and ideas in science, history, and the arts.

Geodes Level K Classroom Library (Now Available) Completes the K-2 Set

The *Geodes* Level K Classroom Library is the newest addition to the *Geodes* library and is aligned with the scope and sequence of Foundations Level K. This library contains 48 titles organized into four topical modules:

Modules 1 & 2



Modules 3 & 4



Geodes Level K Modules 1 and 2 Features:

The first half of Level K contains Wordless Picture Books and Sound Search Books.

- Twelve Sound Search Books provide multiple ways for students to grow their phonological awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and letter-sound awareness. The letter-sound sequence aligns with the Foundations Level K curriculum.
- Four story-focused Wordless Picture books help students learn story elements/structures, practice story retelling, and boost oral vocabulary.

Geodes Level K Modules 3 and 4 Features:

The second half of Level K contains a collection of 32 Duet Books.

- Duet Books include child- and adult-read text. The child-read portion of the Duet Books is 90% decodable or higher as aligned with the scope and sequence of correlating Foundations Units. The remaining percentage is comprised of non-decodable words, many of which convey key content knowledge.
- Duet Books provide students with decoding practice with authentic and knowledge-building reading experiences.

Geodes Level 1 and Level 2 Classroom Libraries

Libraries for Levels 1 and 2 provide meaningful practice to apply the skills students are learning in Foundations® Levels 1 and 2. And with *Geodes'* alignment to *Wit and Wisdom*®, students simultaneously reinforce and build content knowledge and vocabulary that is critical to developing readers.

The *Geodes* Level 1 Classroom Library:

Contains 64 unique titles that align with the Foundations Level 1 scope and sequence and offers texts that are 80% decodable. The books are arranged into four topical modules:

- A World of Books
- Creature Features
- Powerful Forces
- Cinderella Stories



The *Geodes* Level 2 Classroom Library:

Also has 64 unique titles that align with the Foundations Level 2 scope and sequence, and its texts are also 80% decodable at a designated point in the Foundations curriculum. Its four topical modules include:

- A Season of Change
- The American West
- Civil Rights Heroes
- Good Eating




To learn more, visit the Wilson website <https://tinyurl.com/READABLEGEODES>. 

EXPERT TIP ABOUT THE EXPERT TIPS

Did you know that there are over 100 expert tips archived in the Learning Communities for each Wilson Program? And a tip is added to this treasure trove every month!

The learning communities are chock-full of goodies for teachers. Do not miss out on awesome resources such as video demonstrations of activities, printable materials, discussion boards, and other helpful ideas for your instruction.

Membership in the Learning Communities is currently provided with attendance at a program introductory workshop/course or with the purchase of a Teacher's Manual. Use the code in the front of your manual to get enrolled today!

Another great tip for teachers new to Just Words® and Foundations® ... Look for the light bulb button and explore the community. This will walk you through helpful information as you embark on the program. 



Wilson Academy®

Prevention/ Early Intervention
Learning Community
The Learning Community for Foundations®



Intervention
Learning Community
The Learning Community for Just Words®



Intensive
Learning Community
The Learning Community for Wilson Reading System®



A LEAP OF FAITH

Wilson Educator Establishes Free Dyslexia Clinic with Support of Community

Pat Shafer retired in 2016, but that didn't stop her from teaching. Following two decades as a reading teacher in public and parochial schools, the idea of no longer sharing the gift of literacy with students was unfathomable.

"I retired because I wanted more time to travel, but I knew I couldn't leave working with kids behind," shares Pat, a Wilson® Dyslexia Therapist (W.D.T.) and Foundations® Presenter for Levels K-3. Recognizing the tremendous need in her community, Pat combined her passion for helping struggling readers and her extensive experience in Wilson programs to establish a bustling nonprofit tutoring center in Green Bay, WI.

Pat's idea to open On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic in 2018 was met with an outpouring of community support—starting with her church, Union Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC)—the moment she proposed the idea.

"They believe that this is a matter of justice for students with dyslexia, and really wanted to support what I was trying to do," Pat explains. The clinic is housed in the church's basement at no charge. Grants from the church and the National UCC, as well as donations from area churches, businesses, charitable foundations, parents, and community organizations, provide funding to maintain the clinic. They also provide resources for Wilson Reading System® (WRS) tutor training and student materials.

At On the Mark, Pat and her team of 12 tutors provide free WRS instruction to students with dyslexia who otherwise would not have access to the intensive instruction they need. Pat named the clinic in memory of her son, Mark, who died of a brain tumor at age 13. The clinic's name, she says, also aptly defines her conviction about the effectiveness of Wilson programs.

"Wilson is something I have fought for because I believe it's the most complete program to cover comprehension, fluency, reading, and spelling. I just think it's the best and I'm really committed to it."

Pat is equally adamant that finances should not prevent kids with dyslexia from learning to read and succeed academically. "Students with dyslexia have a right to read just as other kids," she says.

In 2019, the clinic served 46 students, up from 24 the previous year. This year, 57 attended summer sessions after Pat diligently put extensive precautionary measures in place. Protective masks,



Wilson® Dyslexia Therapist (W.D.T.) Pat Shafer took a leap of faith and opened a free tutoring center for students with dyslexia in her community. In two years, On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic has more than doubled in size.

plexiglass barriers built by Pat's husband Bruce, hand sanitizer, social distancing, and other safety measures remain in place this school year.

Grateful parents and colleagues often speak of Pat's limitless energy and passion for raising awareness about dyslexia to ensure students are seen and understood.

"Pat truly exemplifies what it means to be an amazing teacher and person," shares Cheri Dietrich, one of the clinic's tutors.

Wilson is something I have fought for... Students with dyslexia have a right to read just as other kids.

"Pat started On the Mark because she saw the needs of so many students in the area. However, she didn't stop with just opening the clinic and serving as the executive director. She is also an incredible teacher. She has helped so many students with dyslexia soar to new heights in their reading and writing. She selflessly gives her gift of teaching each day, asking for nothing in return."

As for Pat, the rewards of her vocation are immeasurable.

"My cup is full from how much these parents feel I am helping their kids," she says. "It really takes a village. I'm just touched and amazed by the teamwork and generosity that make this happen. When I need something, it shows up. It's a leap of faith." ∞

KEEP MOVING FORWARD

The Remarkable Rowley Family Faces Adversity with Fortitude

The Rowley family of five shares a unique configuration of hereditary traits that affect all aspects of their lives. Yet the medical and learning challenges they face daily do not stop them from embracing life with fortitude and a can-do attitude, while serving others along the way.

“Our family is really complex. We’re a rare genetic family and we each have our own challenges,” shares mother Michelle, who, with her husband Allan Rowley, M.D., is raising sons Aden, 15, and Alec, 13, and daughter Anna, 10, to tackle adversity, including dyslexia and other learning disabilities, with tenacity and perseverance.

Early intervention was key for the children to address dyslexia and other neurobiological differences, explains Michelle, who first noticed a pattern of reading difficulty with her oldest son, followed by her two younger children.



Aden

“I noticed that Aden would know some words on the page, and when they appeared on the next page, he wouldn’t know them. He didn’t have the recall.”

Diagnosed with dyslexia, a trait the three siblings share with their paternal grandfather, Aden began Wilson Reading System® (WRS) instruction at the Jones-Gordon School in Paradise Valley, AZ, with Wilson® Dyslexia

Therapist (W.D.T.) Melissa Wiegand, now a Wilson® Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.). Aden served as Melissa’s practicum student for her WRS Level II certification, and his journey helped his family and teachers recognize and address similar learning disabilities in his siblings.

“WRS helped me read more fluently. It also helped improve my spelling and expanded my vocabulary. My Wilson teacher, Ms. Melissa, was a great, fun, and creative teacher,” shares Aden, who completed Step 12 last fall while also earning his Eagle Scout award and solo student pilot license. This year, he, Alec, and their dad are training to bike the 800-mile Arizona Trail in spring 2021.

Alec, too, has experienced his share of achievements. Among them, he ended the school year by completing WRS Step 12 remotely with teacher Lauren Nolan, a Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioner (W.D.P.) who also works with Anna.

Typically, the school community celebrates WRS graduation with a classroom party. Under current circumstances, Lauren brought the festivities to Alec’s home for a socially distanced get-together.

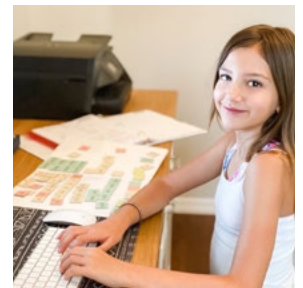


Alec

“The Wilson program has given me confidence in reading,” Alec shares. “Now, when I read books, I can enjoy them. It is easier to read and I understand more vocabulary. The program has also helped with my spelling. My Wilson teacher, Ms. Lauren, was supportive and gave me work that was challenging, but never too difficult for me to do,” says Alec, whose hobbies include adventure

hiking, cliff jumping, sailing with the Sea Scouts, and listening to comedy.

Anna began WRS with Lauren to tackle the challenges of dyslexia. She started Step 5 remotely this year and will continue to work toward completing the program, just as her brothers have done. The lessons are challenging and she struggles, but Anna ultimately prevails because she knows the English language will one day make sense. She draws upon the school’s rallying cry, “You can do hard things,” for inspiration.



Anna

In addition to their numerous academic and extracurricular accomplishments, the family is also committed to helping others who experience similar challenges. Michelle and Aden have testified in support of dyslexia legislation that would benefit the state’s public school students. The family also participates in research studies at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to help physicians and scientists better understand rare medical conditions.

“All three of our children have pretty significant challenges, but they don’t let that slow them down,” Michelle says. “We acknowledge our hardships and we can have moments of self-pity, but we also have the mindfulness that it could be a lot worse. Our family motto is ‘Be kind. Be Grateful. Be You,’ plus, ‘Keep Moving Forward.’ The Scout motto is ‘Do Your Best,’ and the school motto is ‘You can do hard things.’

“Put all that together and you get a kid with grit and resilience. That’s Aden, Alec, and Anna. I call them my heroes because they are so impressive in how they take each challenge in stride.”

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

WRS Alumnus Soars to New Heights

Ad *Astra Per Aspera*, Latin for “to the stars through adversity,” is how Adam Maidman describes his journey to the world of possibilities and opportunities that opened when he learned how to read.



Adam

Diagnosed with severe dyslexia in elementary school while growing up in Connecticut, Adam's trajectory from struggling reader to graduate student, first-year teacher, and self-proclaimed “history nerd” is embodied by a single sheet of paper. Framed and displayed above his desk, the Wilson Reading System® (WRS) Certificate of Completion he earned in seventh grade signifies a pivotal point in his life.

“I would not be where I am without Wilson and the tireless efforts of my teacher, Sharon Wolf,” Adam says of his instructor, a Wilson® Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.) and Wilson® Dyslexia Therapist (W.D.T.). “Sharon took a struggling little boy who could not read *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* in fourth grade and gave me hope. In addition to teaching me to read, she opened my eyes to a whole world that I never knew was out there, through books,” he says.

“She was determined to see me succeed despite my falling asleep in her office after long school days, tears, and the whims of a little boy. We both were determined. Spending time with her and watching the impact she has on her students made me want to become a teacher.”

Adam's career choice was also influenced by other memorable educators. “My teachers all throughout were key. They always supported me and supported my parents.”

He credits an astute second grade teacher for recognizing the severity of his reading disability and the need for intervention.

Following two years of instruction, his difficulties persisted. When it was determined Adam would need intensive, explicit, multisensory structured literacy instruction to overcome his dyslexia—a trait he shares with his father and one of his three siblings—he began WRS instruction.

He was also inspired by a revered high school history teacher, who lined her walls with the covers of *TIME* magazine to show students they were living through history in the making, as well as to impress upon them the link between current events and the past. These are messages the Chicago resident now shares with his own students using the front pages of newspapers.

“Since Wilson, I have only continued to develop a passion and craving for learning, as I am constantly reading,” shares Adam, who went on to study Latin for five years. “My excitement for knowledge and reading has no boundaries. When I went to college, I decided to be a history major, which is probably an unusual major for a person with dyslexia, as it's all reading and writing.”

At the University of Chicago, Adam became active with campus organizations such as *The Chicago Journal of History* and volunteered for two years with the Chicago nonprofit Debate it Forward. Since earning his bachelor's degree in June, he is now teaching history to 150 sophomores at a charter school in Gary, IN, through the national nonprofit Teach for America—all while pursuing a master's degree. He plans to continue toward a doctoral degree in history or law and eventually pursue WRS Level I Certification to further assist students.

“If I could teach students history and help them learn to read, that would be a dream,” he says. “One of the greatest gifts I ever received was dyslexia. It's a pain, it takes me longer to do things. But it has given me such a strong work ethic. It changed the way I look at things and taught me to overcome obstacles. I tell my students, ‘As long as you're willing to work hard, you're motivated, and inspired, you'll fulfill your dreams.’” 🌟

“My excitement for knowledge and reading has no boundaries.”



Calling All Teachers!

Do you have a story you would like to share about your Wilson student or graduate? Email us at: stories@wilsonlanguage.com

WRS STEP 12 X 2

Middle School Students' Success Doubles Their Teacher's Joy

Recently, Amy Geary, a Wilson® Dyslexia Therapist (W.D.T.) and reading consultant in Connecticut, wrote to share the success of two remarkable students who reached the milestone of completing Wilson Reading System® (WRS) Step 12 remotely following school closures this spring. When we received her glowing testaments to rising eighth graders Jayden and Ben, we couldn't wait to spread the joy as well!

Dear Wilson,

Two of my students completed WRS Step 12 this spring during the COVID-19 school closure. I am so proud of them that I wanted to share their success with you!

Ben was identified as a student with dyslexia when he was in third grade. At the start of fourth grade, he began WRS instruction and continued working through each Step as a middle schooler. As a seventh grader, Ben progressed to Step 12 in March. His excitement heightened because he was in the final WRS Step. Then, COVID-19 forced our school to close, and online learning began. For Ben, this transition was difficult. Like many other students around the country, Ben had difficulty with internet services and electronic devices. Yet, he endured. Quitting was never an option for Ben. By the end of the school year, he had completed the WRS Step 12 post-test.

When I think about Ben and this accomplishment, I cannot stop smiling! WRS was not a quick fix for him, but he persevered. He is a person who tends to go with the flow. His teachers often comment that he is a kind, polite student who knows how to advocate for himself respectfully. His knowledge of practical skills and the world around him is quite astonishing. To know Ben personally and watch him cross the "WRS finish line" was indeed a gift.

Jayden began WRS in 2016 when he was in fourth grade. Although reading and writing were difficult for him, his teachers always said he was a dedicated student who continually tried to do his best. His diligence and WRS followed him into middle school in 2018 and Jayden continued to push himself to succeed.

When COVID-19 forced our school district to close all in-person classes and transition to distance learning back in March, Jayden was unfazed by the sudden change. He was in his last trimester of seventh grade and had just started WRS Step 12. He met faithfully with me three times a week for an hour at each session online. Although the concepts taught at this advanced Step were challenging, Jayden never faltered to try his best. In May, Jayden completed the WRS Step 12 posttest.

Jayden's accomplishment is a result of his character. Teachers have consistently remarked on his hard work and positive approach to challenges. Personally, I'm impressed with his unstoppable drive to succeed, even when the instruction and learning are challenging. At the end of this school year, Jayden accomplished two goals. He finished the WRS program, and earned honors in his academics!



Ben



Jayden

Wilson wishes Ben and Jayden all the best this school year as WRS alumni. 🍀

IN MEMORIAM: MICHELLE DELANEY



With sadness and gratitude, we bid farewell to our friend and colleague, Michelle Delaney. Michelle began her Wilson career as a 1999-2000 Intern. She then served as a Lead Trainer before becoming a Literacy Specialist in 2010. In these roles, Michelle supported

Long Island and New York City (NYC) area schools and teachers. She also was a member of the NYC CORE Foundations® Workshop Team.

Michelle was passionate about tutoring Wilson Reading System® (WRS) students. She oversaw more than 350 WRS certifications, thereby helping many teachers reach countless children in need.

"If she wasn't training teachers, she was working with students," says friend and Literacy Advisor/Literacy Specialist (LA)/(LS), Lori Freeman. "Michelle was so dedicated. No matter what trials she was going through, she carried on with a smile."

Indeed, everyone who worked with Michelle appreciated her commitment, kindness, and sense of humor.

"I was Michelle's mentor for the last year and we accompanied each other on school visits," explains LS David Marsh. "It was obvious she valued the mission and enjoyed helping teachers and students. She had a contagious laugh, was curious about others, cared about the people she worked with, and loved making personal connections."

Michelle built strong, long-lasting relationships with the teachers she supported. In fact, many teachers she trained became trainers and continued to stay connected.

"Michelle was my Level I Certification Trainer about 20 years ago," explains Gina Conrad, a Wilson® Credentialed Trainer in NY. "She called our group her 'Long Island Crew,' because we came from all over the island. Michelle made sure we all kept in touch and reconnected at the Wilson Trainer Retreat."

Michelle made a positive difference in the world around her and her contributions to literacy will reverberate through generations of students and teachers—a sentiment echoed by Barbara Wilson.

"Michelle always approached life with a smile. She was a wonderful Trainer who was passionate about teacher and child success. She was a tremendous part of the Wilson team for many years and was loved by many. Michelle will be greatly missed." 🌸

WILSON® ACCREDITED PARTNERS

We are pleased to announce that several new organizations are working hard to become part of our national network of Wilson® Accredited Partners. This will help us to meet the ever-increasing demand for Wilson's programs.

This year, four organizations received accreditation to provide professional learning: Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA; Montgomery County Intermediate Unit 23 in Norristown, PA; Banyan School in Fairfield, NJ; and Hyde Park Day School in Chicago, IL. With these additions, Wilson now has 19 accredited partners.

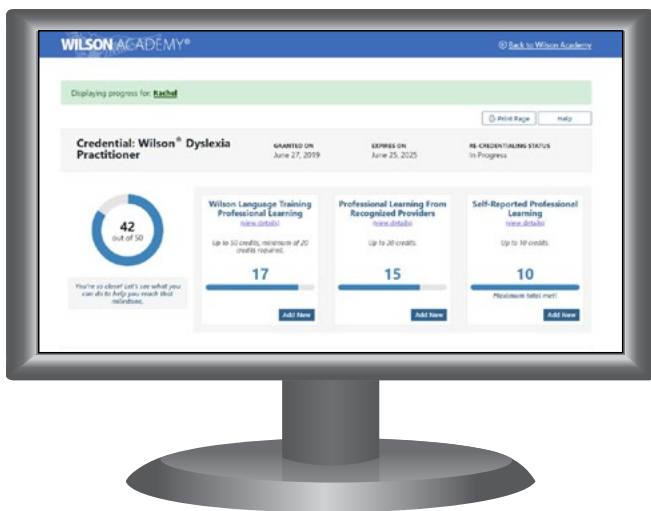
Additionally, the Southeast Reading Center in Chattanooga, TN, and The Jones-Gordon School in Paradise Valley, AZ, are pursuing partner accreditation.

Since 2002, the Wilson Accredited Partner program has been embedded at state educational service centers, higher education institutions, private schools, and professional organizations.



For more information about professional learning opportunities available through a Wilson® Accredited Partner, please contact the partner organization directly. You can find all of our partners on our website at <https://tinyurl.com/WLTPartners>. Educational organizations interested in learning more about the partner program and accreditation process may contact Judy Nicholas, Director of Partner Relations, at jnicholas@wilsonlanguage.com. 🌸

WILSON® DYSLEXIA PRACTITIONERS AND THERAPISTS CAN TRACK THEIR RENEWAL SUCCESS



In June, Wilson launched an interactive tool for Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioners (W.D.P.) and Wilson® Dyslexia Therapists (W.D.T.) to use to keep track of their ongoing professional learning activities and monitor their progress toward renewing their credential.

This enhanced credential tracking system can now be accessed through Wilson Academy®. Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioners and Therapists can enter their continuing education activities in this self-service system as they work toward renewing their credential every five years.

“We have been working hard on the development of this dynamic system and are so excited to introduce it to our Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioners and Therapists. We know they will love how easy it is to access and update their recertifying activities,” shares Deanna Fogarty, Vice President of Curriculum and Professional Learning.

Additional reference material has been created and posted to our company website to help Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioners and Therapists with their credential experience and answer common questions. Resources include:

- FAQs for Wilson® Professional Credentials
- Wilson® Professional Credential Event Guide
- Credential “How To” Videos
- Free & Low-Cost Wilson® Professional Learning Credit (WPLC) Offerings

Wilson Professional Credentials recognize educators’ expertise and proper training in an evidence-based intensive reading intervention program, and their commitment to remain current in the field of reading instruction and dyslexia.

To view the reference material and learn more about earning and maintaining your credential, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/WRScredentials>. ↻

HIGHER EDUCATION HIGHLIGHT

Online Graduate Programs Include Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioner Certification

In pursuing its mission, Wilson® collaborates with colleges and universities that share its goal of preparing teachers to successfully work with struggling readers. Through these programs, educators can pursue a master’s degree and/or graduate-level certificate while completing Wilson Reading System® (WRS) Level I Certification. Graduates develop the knowledge, skills, and expertise to effectively help students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities become fluent, independent readers.

Most recently, Fairfield University in Connecticut and McDaniel College in Maryland launched fully online graduate programs in multisensory structured literacy instruction that incorporate WRS Level I Certification.



The 10-credit Online Dyslexia Interventionist Certificate, offered through Fairfield University’s Graduate School of Education & Allied Professions, may be completed as a stand-alone option or as part of a master’s degree in Remedial Reading and Remedial Language Arts (all tracks) and in Special Education (sixth-year track). The first cohort of graduate students completed certification this spring, and a new cohort is enrolled in the current academic year.



McDaniel College’s Reading Specialist: Literacy Leadership master’s degree program has added a new 10-credit dyslexia specialization, which includes WRS Level I Certification. The first cohort of educators is enrolled in the current academic year.

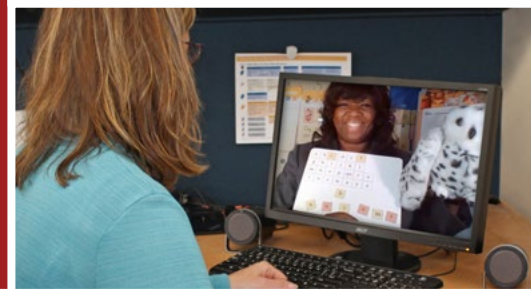
For more information about Wilson’s higher education partnerships, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/HEPartner>. ↻

October is Dyslexia Awareness Month,

but our work continues all year long.

Let's keep learning together!

<https://tinyurl.com/WLT2020-21>



Save the Dates for the ...

NEW!

Annual Wilson® Trainer Meeting | July 12-13, 2021

Wilson® Certified Teacher Conference | July 12-13, 2021

Fundations® Conference for Presenters & Facilitators | July 14-15, 2021



Whether we will be meeting in person or virtually, we look forward to being together!