



THE Decoder

THE VOICE OF THE WILSON COMMUNITY

DYSLEXIA & WILSON THROUGH THE DECADES

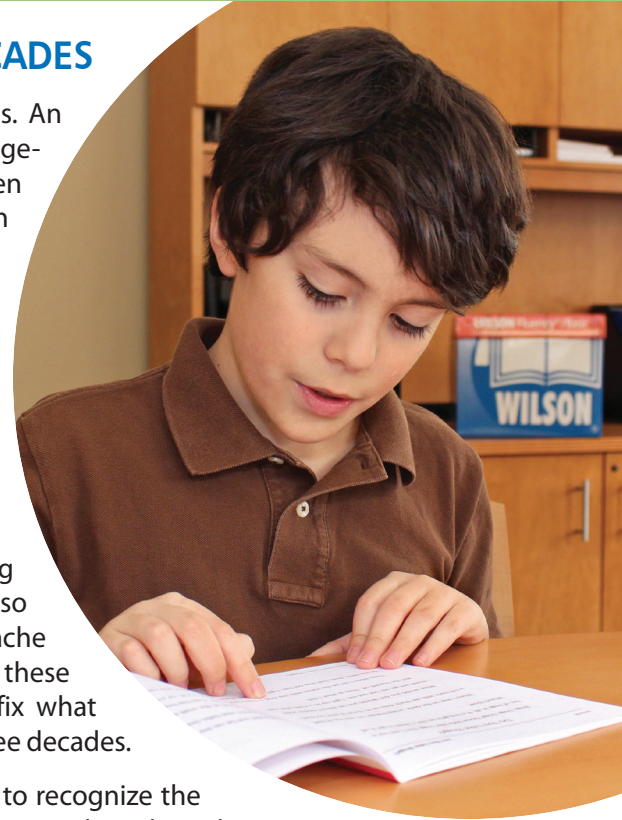
From the largest cities to the tiniest hamlets, dyslexia knows no bounds. An estimated 10 to 20 percent of school children struggle with the language-based reading disorder, which is neurobiological in origin, quite common, often inherited, widely misunderstood, and, as decades of experience and research has shown us, absolutely treatable.

Since the release of the Wilson Reading System® in 1988, we have worked side by side with educators, schools, and districts to teach students with dyslexia and help them become successful readers and writers. Our journey over the past three decades has taken us in many directions, from working with teachers and students in classroom reading nooks to testifying in Congress in support of the READ Act.

Along the way, we have had the profound experience of connecting with countless educators who are thrilled to learn how to teach their struggling students—who previously tried so many things, without answers. We have also encountered countless families whose experiences are similar in their heartache and frustration in seeking solutions for their children with dyslexia. It is these teacher, family, and student stories, and their dogged determination to fix what indeed can be fixed, that have been the driving force behind our work for three decades.

Now, thankfully, there is growing momentum across the nation for schools to recognize the existence and treatment of dyslexia. Largely through the efforts of Decoding Dyslexia branches,

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BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF READERS

After identifying an increased number of students with dyslexia, educators at the Medford Area Public School District in north central Wisconsin united with community, healthcare, and business partners to achieve the shared goal of improving literacy for adults and children.

Following a review of several multisensory structured language programs, the district chose the Wilson Reading System® (WRS) for its evidence-based curriculum and staff professional development, explains Joseph Greget, Director of Special Education for the 2,550 student district. On an August evening in 2009, educators, parents, and community members gathered at the middle school to receive an overview of WRS, led by Wilson® Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.) Janet Lorenz.

As a result, 12 educators volunteered to pursue WRS Level I Certification. The following year, five of those teachers continued on for WRS Level II Certification. After seeing students' continued success with WRS and the program's expansion in

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THE Decoder

THE VOICE OF THE WILSON COMMUNITY

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

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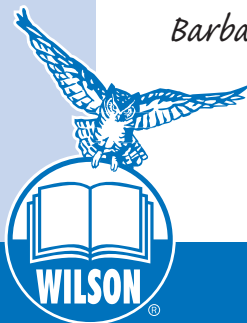
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DEAR FRIENDS,

Over the past three decades, it has been an honor and privilege to work with so many dedicated individuals and organizations on our shared mission of literacy achievement, from the students who motivate us to the educators who inspire us.

Each issue of *The Decoder* provides an opportunity to recognize the meaningful work taking place in Wilson classrooms throughout the country, as well as the achievements of once-struggling readers and the supportive, encouraging teachers who taught them to read.

In the following pages, you'll read about several of these inspiring individuals, like young author Aidan Colvin and first-year teacher Marianna Wells, along with school districts and community organizations that recognize the personal, professional, and social impact of literacy on the well-being of children, adults, and society.

You'll also learn about many exciting changes that are in store in the coming year as we prepare to launch the Wilson Reading System® 4th Edition.

The release of this updated, enhanced edition in early 2018 happens to coincide with the 30th anniversary of WRS, our flagship program. Developed in 1988 to meet the educational needs of students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities, WRS is successfully implemented in public school districts of all sizes, as well as private schools, reading centers, and adult education settings.

This issue also contains information about Wilson Professional Credentials and other opportunities for professional learning, such as our partnerships with colleges and universities that embed WRS Certification into graduate-level programs to help meet a growing demand for educators trained in multisensory structured language instruction.

As a community of educators, we have come a long way since those early years at Wilson. However, our mission has remained focused on providing quality professional learning and ongoing support so educators have the skills and tools they need to help their students become fluent, independent readers.

We hope you enjoy!

Sincerely,

Barbara & Ed Wilson



DYSLEXIA & WILSON THROUGH THE DECADES

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more and more states have enacted some form of dyslexia legislation. “The Decoding Dyslexia families, starting with New Jersey, really pushed for schools, districts, and states to recognize that the term dyslexia exists,” says Vicki Myers, Wilson’s Senior Legislative and Higher Education Liaison.

Vicki, a special education teacher for 24 years, who then served as a special assistant for the U.S. Department of Education, was most recently hired to help Wilson monitor and support dyslexia legislation. “States are passing and implementing dyslexia laws recognizing the essential link between early identification and treatment for students with dyslexia, and their academic success. While some states are in the beginning stages of passing and implementing dyslexia laws, there are others that are taking the lead in providing professional learning for their teachers and staff, to provide the kind of intensive instruction that we know students with dyslexia need,” says Vicki.

Research has clearly proven that dyslexia exists and is treatable. As states implement laws, the first step is for the identification of students with dyslexia to be aligned with

the scientific understanding of it. The next step, is to assure that after identification, the instruction also aligns with evidence of what works for these students.


Teachers yearn to help their students—that is why they teach. Our work over three decades has proven that the research-based instruction is truly possible in public school settings when teachers have the professional learning and ongoing support needed to understand this intensive instruction in depth.

Though many years in the making with much still to do, progress is being made through parent awareness and involvement, legislative action, and responsive school districts. As a result, more and more teachers are learning about dyslexia. The key now will be to assure that they are also given the important and in-depth professional learning that will ultimately impact their students with dyslexia. So much has changed over three decades, yet so much remains the same. That is ... there is much work to be done! 

NATIONAL DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH

It’s been 130 years since German Ophthalmologist Rudolf Berlin first coined the term dyslexia, which he derived from the Greek prefix “dys” meaning poor or inadequate and “lexis” meaning words or language. Since then, the understanding of dyslexia, dyslexia legislation, and dyslexia awareness continues to evolve.

In recent years, states and advocacy groups throughout the country recognize National Dyslexia Awareness Month in October to support those with dyslexia and those closely affected by it.

Many mark the occasion by participating in the “Light it Up Red” or “Redeeming Red” movement. The color red, symbolizing a reclaiming of the hue from the red correctional marks that so often appear on struggling students’ papers, can be found adorning hotels, bridges, and city halls, as well as on the Wilson campus. In support of Decoding Dyslexia MA’s efforts, our campus is illuminated in red during October, from the clothing of our staff on National Dyslexia Awareness Day to our entry sign. We also host our annual Parent Night, an opportunity for parents to learn more about dyslexia, proper interventions, and ways to obtain assistance for their children. This fall, Wilson Senior Educational Technologist Nanci Shepardson presented an overview on assistive technology and provided guidance on selecting and evaluating effective tools. 



Wilson Staff Celebrating National Dyslexia Awareness Day.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF READERS

Medford Area Public School District, Wisconsin

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Medford Area School District Director of Special Education Joseph Greget, Wilson Credentialed Trainer Kris Brandner, WRS students Aimee and Josh, and Wilson Dyslexia Therapists Misty Galli and Kathy Schumacher.

schools, the district looked toward achieving sustainability by supporting the professional learning of Kris Brandner to become their district's Wilson Credentialed Trainer. She is currently leading the district's next group of teachers in WRS Level I Certification while continuing to coach colleagues.

"The Wilson Reading System is an intensive reading program that gives parents hope, gives kids a chance to feel good about themselves, and gives our teachers a chance to further their professional development and knowledge of dyslexia and the English language," Mr. Greget says.

WRS is now taught in each of the district's elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as its adult education academy. In addition, the district has incorporated Foundations® and Just Words® into its Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction in the elementary and middle schools. To keep the momentum going strong, the school district hosts WRS, Foundations, and Just Words workshops and training sessions for parents and educators.

An active county-wide literacy council made up of district and community members sponsors annual forums, trainings, and events focused on dyslexia awareness, provides monthly book donations, and has installed more than a dozen Little Free Libraries throughout the region over the past five years. There is even a Wilson Little Free Library initiated and overseen by WRS students.


Mr. Greget is President of the volunteer Taylor County Literacy Council, and three of the school district's Wilson educators serve on the Council: Trainer Kris Brandner, and Level II Certified Wilson Dyslexia Therapists Misty Galli and Kathy Schumacher. This trio of teachers was honored with the literacy council's 2016 Friend of Literacy award.

This summer, Josh R., and Aimee S., the district's first two students to complete Step 12 of the WRS program, received the award.

A source of pride in the community is the collaboration between the Medford Area Public School District; the area hospital, Aspirus of Medford; and the thriving Taylor County Literacy Council.

"We formed collaborations and partnerships in varying ways," explains Mr. Greget, which included bringing Wilson programs into Medford Area Schools, referring children for further evaluations, providing dyslexia screenings at the hospital, exchanging information, offering joint trainings, providing panel discussions on dyslexia for parents and educators, and offering a number of community reading initiatives.

"The self-esteem, the success level, the professional development that our staff went through, the pride of parents seeing their kids be able to read, and our community partnerships are truly remarkable," says Mr. Greget, the recipient of Wilson's 2016 Mary Ann Bonneau Administrator of the Year Award for his district and community work.

"It's just a neat time in our community and having Wilson has been instrumental in much of that. I feel like we can be a blueprint. You don't have to be a large school district. You can be a small district like us and still be able to accomplish great things." 



Inspired by their community's commitment to literacy, a group of WRS students brought a Little Free Library to Medford Area Elementary School. In the process of acquiring school and district approval for the project, they gained a valuable hands-on lesson in civic engagement.

NYC MIDDLE SCHOOL QUALITY INITIATIVE: BEARING FRUIT IN THE BIG APPLE



Now entering its seventh academic year, the Middle School Quality Initiative (MSQI) in New York City continues to make strides toward advancing the district-wide goal of improving adolescent literacy.

The initiative was launched by the city's Department of Education in collaboration with the New York City Council Middle School Taskforce in fall 2011. Due to its success, it continues to grow and in the upcoming school year, even more schools will participate in MSQI, which aims to expand targeted and research-based teaching and learning practices to improve student literacy in high-need middle schools.

Of the MSQI partnering schools, a growing number implement Just Words®, Wilson's Tier 2 intervention program, to help students read at or above grade level in preparation for the rigors of high school, college, and careers. This year, Just Words will be used in 32 NYC middle schools.

As a highly explicit, multisensory program, Just Words provides a sophisticated study of word structure and is designed for students in grades four through 12 and adults who have mild to moderate gaps in their decoding and spelling proficiency, but do not require intensive intervention.

"Just Words perfectly fits MSQI's mission of having students in our middle schools graduate at or above an 8th grade reading level. It is effectively working to fill in the holes and gaps to have them achieve that goal," said MSQI Program Director Daniel Wolf of the NYCDOE's Office of Interschool Collaborative Learning.

"As a former Just Words teacher in an MSQI school, I can attest to the growth that is made on the Degrees of Reading Power assessment, as well as the Word Identification and Spelling Test and Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency after a year of complete implementation," Mr. Wolf says.

For students in need of more intensive, Tier 3 instruction, MSQI schools use the Wilson Reading System® (WRS).

MSQI is described as a school-wide literacy improvement effort, where teachers and administrators hone their craft and are given tools and resources to track and improve student literacy skills. "The MSQI framework centers on students becoming successful readers and writers," Mr. Wolf explains. "To achieve this goal, the MSQI team works to develop effective teaching across disciplines with deliberate teaching, strategic instruction, and tiered assessment. With that in place, we can engage students with complex texts through reading, writing, and discussion."

The growing interest in Wilson programs among schools has moved MSQI to increase the number of Just Words and WRS training workshops, enhance communication between the schools and the MSQI team, and improve areas of implementation, says Mr. Wolf, who will complete Just Words facilitator training this year to enhance support for schools that use the program. In the upcoming year, 60 educators will participate in Just Words training; 60 will attend the three-day WRS introductory workshop, and 10 will begin WRS Level I Certification.

"JUST WORDS PERFECTLY FITS MSQI'S MISSION OF HAVING STUDENTS IN OUR MIDDLE SCHOOLS GRADUATE AT OR ABOVE AN 8TH GRADE READING LEVEL."

Members of the MSQI team and partnering schools are advised throughout the year by Wilson Literacy Advisor Linda Wernikoff, who previously served as NYC's Executive Director of Special Education Initiatives. They are also coached and mentored by Wilson Literacy Specialists David Marsh and Roni Maschas.

In addition to the Wilson programs, the MSQI framework focuses on literacy leadership, professional learning, and teacher collaboration, as well as family and school partnerships, Mr. Wolf says. MSQI also promotes collaboration among educators by creating opportunities for inter-school visits that allow teachers to share successful and promising practices with colleagues. Debate tournaments, poetry slams, and parent-teacher home visits are among the methods used to improve literacy and parent engagement.

Mr. Wolf says that the partnership with Wilson has been a key component of this literacy initiative. Barbara Wilson added, "It is our pleasure to be part of it, as both Just Words and the Wilson Reading System were designed to help schools meet their literacy goals with this student population and being part of such a comprehensive effort is exactly what we love to do!"

URBAN DISTRICT ENTERS SECOND DECADE OF DEFYING DYSLEXIA

Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX

Eleven years ago, when the Ysleta Independent School District (YISD) in El Paso, TX, implemented the Wilson Reading System® (WRS) as its Tier 3 intervention program for students with dyslexia, it also created a new department in anticipation of the classroom and professional learning that would follow.

Aptly named the Dyslexia Department, this team identifies, instructs, and serves more than 700 students each year, providing a high-quality education that includes effective, research-based instruction and best practices that meet the students' academic and social needs. Wilson is proud to be a part of this effort since 2006.

The district's Wilson® Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.), Nora Centeno, has led the department for the past 10 years, working with team leaders and teachers to support district-wide instruction in WRS, Just Words®, and Foundations® with fidelity.

The successful implementation of Wilson programs comes from strong support and alignment throughout the system, 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.

"Wilson works for our K-12 students, including the population with dyslexia, our struggling readers, and our dual language learners, because we are consistent and are always ensuring implementation with fidelity," says Nora. "It takes awareness, high-quality training, research, and the right people. It takes support from the school board, the superintendent, associate superintendents, directors, the leadership team, all of us working together in collaboration. Everybody needs to be part of the process. We all have to be connected, because every teacher will eventually have a student in their class with dyslexia."

One of El Paso's largest districts, Ysleta is comprised of 63 campuses and serves 42,500 students. In the early 1990s, the district operated at state minimum achievement levels. By the end of the decade, it began a turnaround that is succeeding well into the 21st century.

Ten of the district's schools have been named national Blue Ribbon Schools and eight others are national Title I




Natalie Reyes, Interventionist with the Ysleta Independent School District, a Wilson Dyslexia Therapist and Level 2 Foundations Facilitator, leads students in Block 3 of a WRS lesson.

Distinguished Campuses. The district has twice been a finalist for the national Broad Prize for Urban Education for its overall performance and improvements in student achievement, and is consistently recognized by the Texas Education Agency, which oversees primary and secondary public education in the state.

YISD initially began its path to becoming a sustainable Wilson district under the guidance of Wilson Senior Literacy Advisor/Literacy Specialist Anne Treadwell. Ruth Stern, Wilson Senior Literacy Advisor, and former Literacy Specialist Lynn Mulrooney, also provided support toward the district's success.

The district has been served by a second Wilson Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.), as well as six Foundations Facilitators, five Foundations Presenters, two Just Words Facilitators, and one Just Words Presenter. Campuses implementing WRS in grades 2 to 12 include 10 high schools, 12 middle schools, 35 elementary schools, and two K-8 schools.

In addition to 18 Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioners (W.D.P.) on staff, nine more are pursuing Level I certification this year. Two teachers are Wilson® Dyslexia Therapists with Level II Certification, and two more are pursuing their certification this year. Barbara and Ed visited several years ago and Barbara says, "It was quite clear that this district has both the leadership and enthusiasm to do great things." 

WILSON PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Wilson® Professional Credentials recognize the importance of ongoing development in the field of reading instruction and high standards of practice within the Wilson community. We value the importance of ongoing development in the field of reading instruction and we are excited to continue a high standard of practice within our Wilson community.

Types of Credentials

Wilson has established the following professional credentials:

Wilson® Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.)

A Wilson Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.) certificate is issued to all individuals who have maintained their Wilson Trainer credentials with Wilson Language Training. A Wilson Credentialed Trainer is highly qualified to supervise individuals in Wilson Reading System® (WRS) professional learning programs that prepare these individuals to teach students with a language-based learning disability, such as dyslexia. This professional designation can be used, including the initials W.C.T., as long as the trainer maintains professional standards set by Wilson and re-credentials every two years according to Wilson Language Training's policies.



Wilson® Dyslexia Therapist (W.D.T.)

A WRS Level II Certified individual is eligible for the Wilson Dyslexia Therapist (W.D.T.) credential. This credential recognizes individuals as prepared to diagnostically teach students identified with a language-based learning disability, such as dyslexia, at advanced levels of encoding and reading and in group settings. This W.D.T. credential is valid for five years and must be renewed every five years after successfully completing re-credentialing activities and coursework.



Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioner (W.D.P.)

A WRS Level I Certified individual is eligible for the Wilson Dyslexia Practitioner (W.D.P.) credential. This credential recognizes individuals as prepared to diagnostically teach students identified with a language-based learning disability, such as dyslexia, at the beginning levels of encoding and reading. This W.D.P. credential is valid for five years and must be renewed every five years after successfully completing re-credentialing activities and coursework.

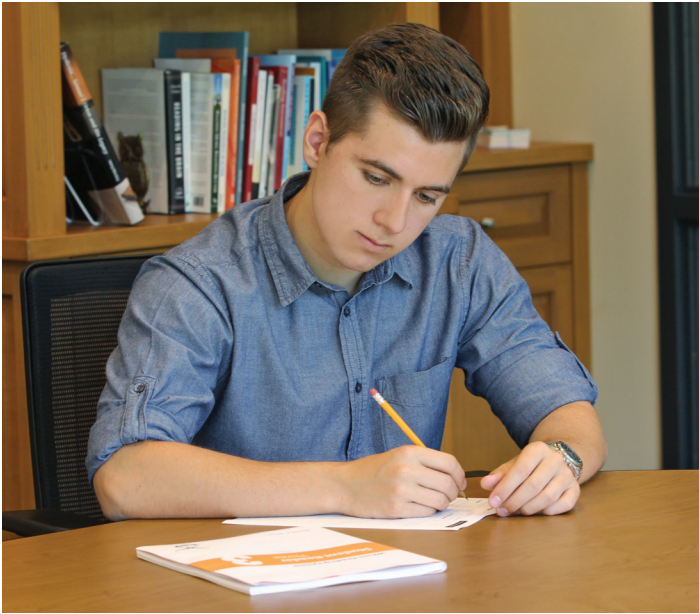


Claiming Your Credentials

Individuals must claim new professional credentials in our system before they can begin using the professional designation of Wilson Dyslexia Practitioner (W.D.P.) or Wilson Dyslexia Therapist (W.D.T.) and be included in Wilson's Directory of WRS Certified Professionals. If you have not already claimed your credentials, please contact Customer Support Services.

Interested in pursuing Wilson credentials? Visit www.wilsonlanguage.com/professional-learning.

Introducing Fourth Edition WILSON Reading System[®]



The WRS 4th Edition includes the following revisions - and more!

- Expanded Instructor Manual
- Focus on core/academic vocabulary
- Integrated and systematic instruction of phonology, orthography, and morphology, including direct teaching of prefixes and Latin & Greek word elements
- Block 3 Guide for fluency and comprehension
- Enhanced student progress monitoring
- Predetermined high frequency words and phrases with high frequency words for dictation
- New and revised sentences and expanded stories in Student Readers with high frequency, core, and academic words included
- Minor scope & sequence changes, specifically related to morphology

Building on three decades of proven success in literacy instruction, the Wilson Reading System (WRS) 4th Edition provides teachers with explicit guidance and resources in word structure, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

With this new, updated edition, we have ensured that teacher and student resources now incorporate all of the research-based best practices that have been part of our teacher professional learning courses since the publication of the third edition.

WRS 4th Edition will be released in early 2018. Wilson Certified Trainers are already being introduced to the revised curriculum and program materials.

Developed in 1988, the Wilson Reading System is an intensive, multisensory structured language program based on the Orton-Gillingham approach to reading instruction. Wilson Language Training and Wilson[®] Accredited Partners are accredited by the International Dyslexia Association, and the Wilson Reading System program is endorsed by the Council of Administrators of Special Education.

For questions and further information, please contact our Customer Support Center at 800.899.8454 or www.wilsonlanguage.com/contact-us.

Wilson Language Training and Wilson[®] Accredited Partners have received accreditation by the International Dyslexia Association. This designation recognizes that Wilson Reading System certifications align with the IDA's Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading.



WRS 4TH EDITION: ASK THE AUTHOR



What was the catalyst for updating the Wilson Reading System?

Barbara Wilson: With this new edition, we incorporate all of the research, knowledge, and experience we've gained working with educators and students with dyslexia over the

past three decades. We wanted to ensure that the teacher and student resources reflected all of the research-based best practices that have already been a part of our teacher professional learning courses, workshops, and practicums for many years.

Describe some of the key changes in the WRS 4th Edition? What remains the same?

BW: This new edition provides teachers with even more explicit guidance and extensive resources in word structure, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension to benefit students. The previous edition of WRS provided practice of some morphological aspects of the English language, but now we are providing a greater emphasis with our systematic approach toward teaching morphology, along with phonology and orthography.

One of the more significant and important updates in the 4th edition is the direct teaching of high frequency sight words in a predetermined sequence. This includes words from the Core Vocabulary List developed by Elfrieda Hiebert and the nonprofit corporation she founded, TextProject, Inc. These words are drawn from 4,000 simple word families and account for 90% of the words in written text.

Because the instructor manual now provides more detailed instructions, including the tips and other guidance that are used in our trainings, it has been divided into two volumes. There is more explicit guidance for Block 3 and an end-of-Step lesson plan for each Step.

We're also very excited to introduce new and revised sentences and stories in our Student Readers. Here, high frequency, core, and academic words are incorporated into rich, decodable passages. The passages are intentionally longer to help students build stamina.

Scope and sequence remains largely the same, with only a few minor changes.

What would you like educators to understand about the transition to the WRS 4th Edition?

BW: It's important for Wilson Certified teachers to understand that the revisions in this enhanced edition are based upon knowledge and skills they have already acquired through the certification process.


One of the wonderful things about the 4th edition is that the revisions are embedded into the WRS Ten-Part Standard Lesson Plan in each of the 12 Steps that already exist. So, it won't necessarily require additional time to complete a lesson.

The revisions also address what we have already been working on with our certified teachers and with our credentialed trainers: developing knowledge of core and academic vocabulary, ensuring that students are reading and writing to their potential with fluency, and teaching the important skills necessary for good comprehension.

What are some of the ways students will benefit?

BW: First of all, and perhaps most importantly, students need to READ, READ, READ in order to become proficient. This is true for all students, but for students with dyslexia it is a critical part of their instruction. The Wilson Reading System has always provided controlled text passages in order to provide the opportunity to practice emerging word-level skills, and to develop independent silent reading comprehension, even at early levels of decoding. The 4th edition will tremendously benefit students by providing significantly more text for them to read. There are new stories, longer stories and "old favorites" which have been lengthened to now include significant repetition with high frequency words, core vocabulary, and academic vocabulary.

Students should also greatly benefit from the systematic morphology instruction. This is integrated with their study of sounds and syllables so that their work study will be even deeper. This, in turn, will add to their decoding, spelling, and understanding of words.

Another benefit will be the way that students can track their progress through the Steps. They have always charted their decoding progress, and now in the 4th edition, they will chart other skills as well. I believe that pacing too slowly or quickly through the program is one of the things that sometimes interferes with student success. We have built in more guidance for teachers so that the pacing will be on target and specific areas of need can be addressed. 

REACHING HIGHER

Higher Ed Partnerships Provide Online WRS Certification

With more than half of the country's states enacting laws requiring schools to identify and accommodate the learning needs of students with dyslexia, recognition of the importance of preparing new and veteran teachers with knowledge and skills in multisensory structured literacy instruction has been growing.

For the past decade, we have partnered with colleges and universities to embed Wilson® certification models into reading or special education graduate degree programs to prepare educators to teach even the most challenged readers.

These graduate-level programs allow educators to pursue a master's degree, specialized concentration, or academic certificate while simultaneously earning certification in the Wilson Reading System® (WRS). Upon graduation, practitioners have the special education knowledge, skills, and expertise to meet the needs of students with language-based learning disabilities, such as dyslexia.

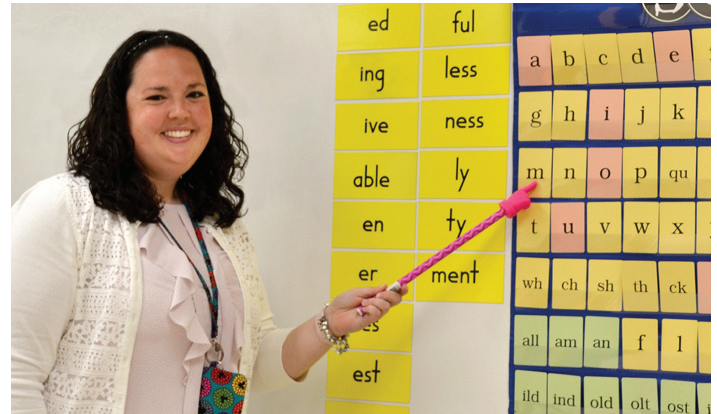
In May, New Jersey teacher Margaret Reilley earned her master's degree, top grades, and the distinction of being the first graduate of a new, online dyslexia specialist program offered in partnership between Fitchburg State University (MA) and Wilson.

"Professional development is important to me because I believe that as educators, we need to continue to learn new strategies and new ways to help our students be successful," says Maggie, a special education teacher in New Jersey's Stafford Township School District.

From her home 260 miles away, Maggie tackled literacy, language disorders, assessment methods and other related topics to earn her M.Ed. in Special Education: Guided Studies – Dyslexia Therapist from the Massachusetts university. As part of the program, she became certified in WRS Level I (Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioner) and Level II (Wilson® Dyslexia Therapist), which are accredited by the International Dyslexia Association.

"It was always a goal of mine to pursue a master's degree," Maggie says. "With these courses and the Wilson training, I was able to increase my knowledge about learning disabilities and how to best help all of my students."

At Drexel University in Philadelphia, WRS Level I Certification is embedded in two online programs: the Master of Science



Fitchburg State's first dyslexia specialist graduate Maggie Reilley

in Special Education: Multisensory Reading Instruction, Level I Concentration, and the Reading Specialist Certification program. The national teacher shortage, particularly in the area of special education, is prompting a growing demand for specialization in effective multisensory teaching, says Lori Severino, Assistant Clinical Professor and Program Director of Special Education at Drexel.

"Nationally, we're having an issue with teachers coming out of programs and not really understanding how to teach students to read, even though they may have been in a special education track," Lori explains. "By preparing teachers to really know what to do, we're setting them up for success. Between learning about dyslexia and reading difficulties and actually working with a student through the certification process, they gain expertise that will enable them to effectively teach and follow the Wilson lesson plan to really affect student outcomes."

Anne McHenry, a May graduate of Drexel's Reading Specialist Certification program, enrolled in the program to update her skills before reentering the teaching profession following a break to raise a family.

"I didn't know how much I was going to love it until I started seeing my practicum student's progress. It was amazing. He went from not really reading – he couldn't spell the word 'put' – to figuring out how the sounds match up with the letters. Now, at this point, he's reading and spelling multisyllabic words. I feel that without the Wilson program, he would have been lost," she says.

"I enjoyed learning about what dyslexia is because, like many others, I believed all the myths about dyslexia. Now

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I know so much more about how the brain functions. The most amazing thing I learned is that with this type of multisensory instruction, students' brains can start to make the connections they weren't making before. It means a lot to me to be able to do this for kids."

Michelle Manning, a kindergarten teacher at a public school in Springfield, PA, said she enrolled in Drexel's Reading Specialist Certification program to build upon her knowledge of the reading process.


"I'm very dedicated to early childhood education and early intervention," says Michelle, who teaches Foundations® in her classroom. "I really wanted to study how we learn to read. I find it so interesting and think it's extremely valuable when our students get the opportunity to receive any intervention and extra support they may need."

In addition to Fitchburg State and Drexel, Wilson also is proud to partner with several other institutions, including

St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, which was the original online provider, Concordia College in Bronxville, NY, Simmons College in Boston, MA, Gordon College in Wenham, MA, and the University of Utah in Murray, UT.

Whether educators work with us in their schools/districts or at a university, our goal is the same: to prepare them with a high level of knowledge and skills to successfully teach reading and writing to all of their students.

Educators who have previously earned graduate credits for Wilson professional learning may be eligible to apply those credits toward a graduate degree program. Please contact the college or university directly to learn more about program requirements and transferring credits for existing work.

For more information about Wilson's higher education partnerships, visit www.wilsonlanguage.com/graduate or contact Peggy Landoli-Cole at MCole@wilsonlanguage.com 

ACCREDITED PARTNERS



WILSON®
Accredited
Partner

Congratulations to our newest Wilson Partner, the Southeast Reading Center in Chattanooga, TN. Wilson Credentialed


Trainer Allison McAvoy co-founded the Southeast Reading Center with Scarlet Farr in 2014 to reach struggling readers in need of foundational reading skills. In addition to its work with students, the center also provides professional development workshops, seminars, and coaching in multisensory structured language instruction.

Prior to co-founding the center, Allison worked in special education for more than 30 years until her retirement. She is a member of the Board of Directors for the Tennessee Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, and last year was appointed to serve on the Tennessee Department of Education's new Dyslexia Advisory Council. The advisory council, established as part of the state's Say Dyslexia bill, is tasked with laying out the groundwork for how the new law will roll out in districts throughout the state.

Congratulations are also in order for our two newly Accredited Partners following a year-long accreditation process: Noble Academy in Greensboro, NC, and Wolf's Diagnostic Education Network (DEN) in Canton, CT, founded by Wilson Trainer Sharon Wolf.

Founded in 1987 as the city's first full-time school dedicated to students with learning disabilities, Noble Academy serves students in grades K-12 and provides Wilson training to educators in North Carolina and surrounding states.

Established in 2004, the Wolf's DEN provides tutoring services, referrals, and educational consulting, as well as Wilson workshops.

We are so grateful to our 20 training partners, which play a vital role in providing Wilson professional learning opportunities to educators and school districts across the country. Wilson Accredited Partners are accredited by the International Dyslexia Association. For a complete list of Partners, visit our website. 

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Six years ago, 10-year-old **Aidan Colvin** was featured in the spring 2011 issue of *The Decoder*. He was described as a reader, website builder, and WRS graduate. Now 16, Aidan can add another title to his accomplishments: published author.

Looking for Heroes: One Boy, One Year, 100 Letters recounts Aidan's year-long journey of writing 100 letters to successful individuals with dyslexia, asking for advice, guidance, and words of wisdom about achieving success with dyslexia. The responses provided no single secret to success, but instead, letters from writer John Irving, arctic explorer Ann Bancroft, surgeon and CEO Delos Cosgrove, filmmaker Harvey Hubbell V, and others, offered insight into the persistence necessary to succeed.

"Their letters made me feel less alone and more hopeful," Aidan says, describing the process of writing his book. "They made me see the positive aspects that come with dyslexia, such as thinking differently, learning grit, and developing verbal and people skills. I wanted other kids with dyslexia to know this, so I put these letters into a book."

For both Aidan, the 2016 International Dyslexia Association Remy Johnston Merit Award recipient, and his mother, Liisa



Aidan Colvin and his mom, Liisa Ogburn


Ogburn, who assisted with the book, this journey toward understanding success with dyslexia wasn't always easy.

"We had tried and tried, through sheer will and repetition, to teach Aidan how to read single words. But it seemed nothing ever stuck," says Liisa. With the help of the Wilson Reading System® (WRS) and a tutor, Aidan finally cracked the code to decoding and encoding.

"It was the first time I started to recognize the words that all my friends had been reading for years," Aidan says. From there, he transformed into a reader, writer, and inspiration for others with dyslexia.

"It's important to shepherd your child through these early challenges and continue to tell them that you see how hard they are working and that you know their efforts will pay off, because one day, it's true," Liisa says.

What's next for Aidan? Following his graduation from high school in 2019, he intends to go to college to continue his education.

"I just want to keep telling my story so kids like me can have hope that, with effort, they can do whatever they want." 



Emily Wendelken, RN

Medical terminology such as "hepaticocholangiocholecystenterostomy" could scare anyone away from entering the healthcare field, but not **Emily Wendelken**.


After graduating at the top of her class in 2014 from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS) School of Nursing in Boston, Emily became a licensed Registered Nurse and now works in the Labor and Delivery department at the Nantucket Cottage Hospital in Nantucket, Massachusetts.

It took no shortage of determination for her to reach this point of success. Emily didn't learn she had dyslexia until middle school.

"I remember spending five hours reading chapters for English class that should have taken 30 minutes," she says. But with the help of Ann Maury and Beth Connors, her Wilson Reading System® (WRS) tutors at the time, Emily excelled in honors English and was inducted into the National Honor Society.

At MCPHS, with hard work and testing accommodations, she went on to receive academic awards in chemistry and anatomy while earning her Bachelor of Science degree.

Reflecting upon how she found success, Emily notes that the hard work throughout her schooling allowed her to do well in nursing school. "You have to be a huge advocate for yourself, understand the type of learning disability that you have, and learn how you learn."

With these skills and knowledge, even the longest words in her medical textbooks didn't stand in her way. 



Marianna Wells

Determination, a supportive family, dedicated teachers, and a cadre of mentors brought first-year special education teacher **Marianna Wells** to where she is today.

Orphaned at age 2 in her native Hungary, Marianna and her three older brothers spent seven years in orphanages before coming to

Massachusetts in 1999, when their adoptive parents, Doris and Kevin Wells, welcomed them into a family that already included three sons. Being the only girl among six boys was the least of Marianna's worries. "I came from Hungary completely illiterate in my first language."

In third grade, it became evident that Marianna not only would have to master a new language, but must do so while overcoming a learning disability, requiring her to attend English language and special education classes.


"There are so many different rules and so many different words in the English language; I was always so frustrated and confused," Marianna says. "But, with Wilson, the repetition of everything in the program just clicked and I was actually able to read and write. And then I just fell in love with reading. I truly believe it is the single most

important thing for a student to know how to do."

Marianna says the support and encouragement she received from her public school teachers fueled her determination to catch up with her peers academically, and one day become a teacher herself. Among those early educators was Sharon Hehn, who was pursuing WRS Level I Certification at the time. Marianna became Sharon's practicum student.

After graduating from high school, Marianna double majored in elementary education and sociology at Merrimack College in North Andover, MA, and became the first in her family to earn a bachelor's degree. This spring, she earned a master's degree in Moderate Disability Pre-K through 8th Grade from Merrimack, and in August, began her new job as an eighth-grade special education teacher with the Andover Public Schools.

"My teachers encouraged me and taught me to believe in myself. Because of their constant support, I know the impact that teachers can have on students," she says. "I am so excited and eager to make a difference in the lives of my students just as the educators in my life did for me."

"Marianna is going to be a phenomenal teacher," says Sharon, now a Wilson Trainer. "She understands the struggles of these kids, and she has the compassion to help them." 



Alby Lee Lewis

I suppose I did okay in kindergarten, but the rest of my formal education was pretty much a flop." So shares **Alby Lee Lewis** in *Life with No Words*, a candid memoir about growing up in poverty in Chicago, masking a lifetime of illiteracy, and learning to read at age 55 through the Wilson Reading System®.


Al has shared his story on the Oprah Winfrey show, with Wilson® instructors, and with college students earning degrees in education. When a professor suggested he write a book about his experiences, he said, "Why not?" With the assistance of his wife, Bonnie, who served as his editor, he completed the project last fall.

"To not be able to read is one of the hardest things," says Al, now 76. "Learning to read has made me stronger and more positive in everything I do. I thought my story could help others."

Al navigated adulthood as a nonreader with the assistance and support of his mother and his wife, but managed to keep his illiteracy a secret from everyone else until he retired from his job as a precision grinder.

"Once he told me, the clues became obvious," says his daughter, Dr. Jaclyn "Jackie" Murawska, an assistant professor of mathematics at a Chicago university. For instance, he never helped her with homework, never wrote out the checks to pay household bills, and typically asked for the special when ordering at restaurants.

Both Bonnie and Jackie tried to teach Al to read, to no avail. Then Jackie learned about an adult literacy program at a nearby college. There, Al learned to read with WRS tutor Renai Graham, and overcame what was diagnosed as dyslexia.

"More than writing a book," Jackie shares, "I'm most proud of my father for making the first step and agreeing to go with me to a local adult literacy center to check it out." 

TRAINER MEETING 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Educators from 28 states gathered in the seacoast city of Portsmouth, NH, during the 18th annual meeting of Wilson® Credentialed Trainers. The two-day meeting in July provided an opportunity for 178 Trainers including 50 Wilson Literacy Specialists and Literacy Advisors to reenergize, reflect on the past school year, and cultivate new ideas for the new academic year.

The upcoming release of the Wilson Reading System® 4th Edition in early 2018, and the enhanced curriculum and materials it will provide to instruct students with dyslexia, was a primary focus throughout the meeting.

Wilson Language Training Co-Founders Barbara and Ed Wilson and members of Wilson's Leadership and Fidelity teams and other Wilson professionals warmly welcomed the group of new and long-serving trainers.

During the conference, Barbara presented a big-picture overview of the WRS 4th Edition, as well as in-depth sessions on the "Systematic Approach to Phonology, Morphology, and Orthography" and "Assessment, Accountability, and Instruction."

Deanna Fogarty, Senior Program Director, Intensive Intervention Literacy Initiatives, presented "Wilson Words in the 4th Edition," which further described the program's enhancements. Participants gained insight into how a collection of familiar words and phrases, such as morphology, stamina, core vocabulary, academic vocabulary, prefixes, suffixes, scaffolds, and high frequency words, take on new meaning and emphasis in the 4th edition.

Additional sessions included presentations on word elements, lesson plans, and a walk-through of the new materials. Literacy Specialists and Advisors also met to



Guest speaker Christopher Annino

discuss topics ranging from dyslexia legislation to virtual mentoring and technology.

Christopher Annino, 15, of Connecticut, who completed all 12 WRS Steps three years ago with Wilson Dyslexia Therapist and current Trainer Intern Jeanne Morgan, spoke about overcoming the

challenges of dyslexia and the strides he has made academically and personally since learning to read.

An avid sailor, painter, builder, and dyslexia advocate, Chris began taking college courses at age 12 and is on target to earn an associate's degree next year from Three Rivers Community College in Connecticut.

"I think dyslexia helps teach you the skills you need to succeed, like how to work extra hard and find ways to play to your strengths instead of your weaknesses."

During the meeting, 11 educators were honored as new Wilson Trainers during a brief pinning ceremony. Additionally, three new Accredited Partners and 10 Accredited Partners achieving renewed accreditation status were recognized (see article on page 11).

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Congratulations to our new Wilson Trainers!



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In addition to the professional learning, the annual event provides an opportunity for new Trainers to meet with colleagues who became credentialed 5, 10, 20 or more years ago.


"It's always so enriching to have time to interact with other Trainers; there's so much growth that occurs when we spend time sharing together," said Wilson Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.) Jean Hayward of Minnesota.

"It's very exciting," said new Wilson Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.) Laura Anderson, Curriculum Programming Specialist with the Indian Prairie School District outside of Chicago. "You're with educators who are like-minded, passionate, and constantly striving to hone their skills."



Mentor Dawn Hillstrom and mentee Laura Anderson

Laura's mentor, Dawn Hillstrom of Learning Techniques, a Wilson® Accredited Partner, guided her through the internship process. When completed, the district gained 10 new WRS Level I Certified teachers (Wilson® Dyslexia Practitioners) who joined 11 other previously certified teachers. In her new role, Laura will help train an additional 18 teachers in WRS in the 2017-18 school year.

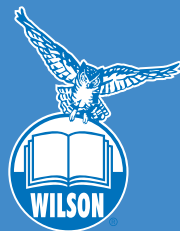
"The best conferences are the ones that have you excited about going back to your district and incorporating something new to help your students," said Evelyn DeRosa, a Wilson Credentialed Trainer (W.C.T.) with the Arlington Public Schools in Massachusetts. "This conference definitely hit that mark!" 

Join Us Next Year in Boston!

July 9-10, 2018 • Seaport Hotel

Conference for Wilson® Certified Teachers

Wilson® Trainer Meeting





Announcing!

Fourth Edition **WILSON Reading System®** 2018



We are pleased to announce the publication of the Wilson Reading System® (WRS) 4th Edition in early 2018!

The new WRS 4th Edition builds on over 30 years of proven success and provides educators with explicit guidance and resources in word structure, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

See pages 8-9 to learn what's new and enhanced in the 4th Edition or visit www.wilsonlanguage.com for details!