

The Primary Success Notebook



From Primary Success Publications

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It's Almost Christmas!

I know it is a cliché, but time flies... For myself, it seems to be flying faster every year as I get older. Now it will soon be Christmas with all the work and fun that goes with this time of year. And then it will be 2012!

The Christmas season is wonderful in the primary classroom. The children love to decorate the classroom, sing songs, read, write and listen to books about the holidays. There are many lessons that will be made more effective by tying them to the holiday. The children can learn about maps and other countries as they travel on the Polar Express, write letters to Santa and do Christmas math problems.

Take time to do some great art projects. Do lots of Christmas stories in Readers' Theatre. Sing at every opportunity. Christmas is a happy time, so share lots of smiles!

Have a great holiday!

Jean



About Primary Success Publications....

We are a Canadian company, based in B.C. on beautiful Vancouver Island. We have been producing resources for primary teachers since 1995. Teachers appreciate the practical easy-to-teach programs in sight reading, phonics, spelling, writing, math, science and social studies. A high percentage of our orders come from teachers or schools who are using some of our other items, and we get many new customers because teachers share their pleasure with their colleagues.

If you enjoy 'The Notebook', pass it on to your friends. They can join the e-mail list from the website and receive all the freebies, too!

Go to the website for great free booklets and ideas. Just click on 'The Notebook' link and the 'Freebies' link on the home page.

My Advice

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

If I could only give one piece of advice to teachers, it would be this: continue to be a life-long learner. The moment you feel you know the best way to teach children to read you will have closed your mind to other methods and improvement.

The following is my experience.....

I began teaching primary in 1960. From that time until 1988 we used sight word basals - the Ginn 720 series was the last of a long line. Contrary to modern opinion the lessons were interesting, well planned and many skills were taught. These sight word basals worked very well, and most students learned to read fluently by the end of grade two. I thought I was doing the very best for my students.

Then the principal had the primary teachers in my school take a course in the use of 'Project Read', a sequential phonics program that was quite scripted. It was for use as remediation with a low group, to be taught by the classroom teacher in the classroom. The following year I had a grade two class with five low kiddies who came to me with very limited reading skills. The principal had a few talks with me, and I guess I would have to say 'pressured' me into teaching Project Read to this group. I protested, saying the children would hate it, the program had no interest or imagination.... but I tried it. We loved it! All five students were reading fluently above grade level by Easter of the year, and I found myself enjoying it thoroughly. After teaching for all those years I learned how to correctly teach phonics, something I hadn't known before.

The next year I taught grade one, and modified the sequential phonics program for whole class lessons, plus using the sight word basals. The children became excellent readers. That class had a number of learning disabled kiddies, and I discovered that one girl could not learn phonics at all but could read by learning the sight words, and several boys could not remember sight words at all but learned to read through phonics. Now, I patted myself on the back..... I knew the best way to teach reading.

Two years later a new principal arrived with a new philosophy - whole language. He destroyed all the basals as he could find and insisted that we all teach through literature. As you can imagine, I protested louder than anyone - but there was no way out. I tried it - and had test scores to prove that my kids were not reading nearly as well, but that didn't matter - after all, testing was considered terrible for kids' self esteem! But even when protesting, I did see some interesting things in whole language and I learned that the students did get enjoyment and benefit from reading more trade books. I discovered that a sequential sight word and phonics programs could be enhanced with many of the literature ideas. Now I knew the best way to teach reading!

That principal left and I began to teach Learning Assistance. There were lots of students being referred - the teachers using whole language were not reaching the slower learners, many of whom should have been taught in the classroom. Once in L.A., I worked to find the students' strengths. Several students did not respond to phonics or sight word programs. It took me longer than it should to discover that these children were kinesthetic learners. Their auditory and visual senses were disabled, but they learned when printing, or acting out with hand motions or body motions as they learned the reading vocabulary. I began to put a lot more movement and kinesthetic strategies into my lessons.

After 'retirement', I began writing programs for primary teachers. I also did a lot of research on-line, and learned many more things from the newer programs that are used. I know that I do not have all the answers. I have lots of good answers, but there is always more out there!

So I understand teachers being resistant to change. I have been there. But improvement only comes through change and the ability to be open to try new things. In these days, principals do not have the power to insist that teachers try new things, so it is up to the individual to explore all the options out there.

Be a life-long learner!

:O) Jean



Kinesthetic Learners

Most children are visual and auditory learners, and only a few students who are learning disabled are kinesthetic learners. This is the most difficult to teach! Here are two examples of children that I knew in my career.

Carrie spent two years in Learning Assistance. She seemed to be a bright child with good oral language skills and a good language background. She learned no sight reading vocabulary in Grade One, and in L.A. during Grade Two and Three learned to blend phonetically, but this wasn't easy for her. She learned sight words slowly and had many reversals when reading, mixing b, d, g, q and p, both mirror reversals and flipping letters vertically, so 'dog' could be god, pog or bop. She struggled to learn to read, and her classroom teacher and I struggled with her. We knew she was learning disabled, but she didn't have a strength in either phonics or sight reading. The answer, however, had been in front of us all the time. In all her printed work in class she never reversed letters and she was able to spell quite well. With practice she could print spelling words she couldn't read easily.

One day when Carrie was in Grade Three I decided to give her a simple test for reversals, a page of upper and lower case letters - some correctly printed and some reversed or flipped. She was to circle the ones that were incorrectly printed. I watched as she hesitated at the letters which she reversed when reading. Then she traced each letter correctly on the table beside the paper with her finger and immediately could feel whether the printed letter was right or not. Her body and hand knew the correct direction and by doing this as she went down the sheet she made no errors. Her eye couldn't tell, but her hand could. It was a learning experience for me, and suddenly the light dawned! After this I taught her reading with lots of printing of the vocabulary and body movements - it helped a great deal.

Michael was a child who had both severe visual and severe auditory problems. Because of this, he had very poor oral language skills and spoke in his own form of 'baby-talk' even at age 10, using pronouns incorrectly and having difficulty retrieving the vocabulary he needed to express himself adequately. For example, at 8 he could not name a picture of a stove or a potato. He could not remember sight reading vocabulary, and he could not learn the sounds. He learned no reading words in Grade One or Two, and progressed very slowly after that. Even after years of lessons in language experience, concentrated phonics and sight reading techniques, he didn't progress above the Grade One level. When he tried to spell an unknown word (and most words were unknown to him) the letters he used were nothing like the letters in the word. For example he might spell 'rain' by writing 'prmb' or 'tli'.

I remember having him give me the sentence "My dog is brown." I wrote it on the board and he copied it several times, saying the sentence aloud. After that he could print it by memory and tell me what it said - but had no concept of the words - he could not find the word 'dog' or print it by itself - it was a kinesthetic exercise rather than reading. He could only remember the mechanics of printing.

Michael's strength was kinesthetic. To remember reading words he had to print them over and over, and to retrieve words he had to print them again - a slow and difficult procedure which only slowly helped his reading. In class he would fill page after page of copied material in lovely printing - but it was totally meaningless to him.

Watch for kiddies who can print and draw very well - who have excellent fine motor skills, but who have difficulty reading either through sight words or phonics. See if they learn words best by printing them and saying the word at the same time. This way they are using all three modalities - they see the word, hear it and feel it, too.

Managing Stress

Stress is a normal part of our lives as teachers. Many teachers have problems sleeping, heart palpitations, depression, headaches, and many more symptoms. Positive stress helps us to perform at a higher level, but often teachers feel out of control or under intense pressure. They may experience the physical, emotional, or relational symptoms brought on by negative stress.

Stress can be caused by the 'class from h***! Every so often we get a class that is very difficult. There may be children with ADHD, ODD or sometimes simply a group of children that do not function well together. We go in every morning resolving to make this day better - but by 9:05 things are falling apart.

Balancing our school and home life can also cause stress. Many teachers spend 60 or more hours each week on the job, bringing it home with them, too. The family suffers because of the focus on the teaching and the stress level rises.

Here are some tips for balancing our lives from experienced teachers.

"Some teachers in my school come early, early in the morning and leave between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. each day. A classroom neighbour of mine says she can't teach without this, but she is showing the effects of the long hours. I think it is a matter of priorities, and then organization.

My family comes first. TEACHING IS JUST A JOB! Yes, it is an important job, but I refuse to give my life to it. My husband and children come first. I try to never bring work or problems home so I can freely spend time and my attention on these most important people. It comes down to organizing my time carefully."

"For several years I tried to plan my own lessons in every subject. This was hugely time consuming and stressful! Now I try to use programs that are already organized. I found that following a program with sequential lessons worked better, too - and saved me lots of time and effort. I follow programs in phonics, reading, writing math and science. There is little preparation in these, as tomorrow's lesson follows today's lesson - all set out for me."

"I try to treat teaching like a 'normal' job! I arrive at school at 7:45 every morning and leave at 4:15. I take half an hour for lunch when I don't think about work - I like to visit with the other teachers in the staff lounge and talk about other things. I put in eight hours of hard work, and that is all school is going to get..... I have children of my own and they deserve a mother who can concentrate on them!"

"I feel that marking should be done with the students. They get immediate feedback and the correcting of errors is meaningful. I can see who needs help with the work and give mini-lessons to children who have problems. Whenever I mark things after school I wonder why I am bothering! The students won't go back tomorrow and correct the mistakes and I am marking for the parents or other adults rather than the children. I mark tests after school, of course, but daily work I try to mark with the kids. It takes time in the day, but it is time well spent. And then I am not marking things in my own time for little purpose. Sometimes I file kids' papers in the trash and I refuse to feel guilty!"

"I got rid of all the clutter in my classroom. I threw out a lot of things - it was hard to do, but it was amazing how good it felt once I had made up my mind! I took everything off the tabletops, put things that were not being used that week away out of sight, put all the math stuff in a cupboard and even put away a lot of the library books. I rotate them and the kids think the hidden ones are new when I bring them out. Now there is nothing on top of the bookcases except one or two books that are being shown, nothing on the tables or filing cabinets or my desk top. The students are finding it much easier to clean up and I even dust regularly - something impossible to do previously. Cleanup is now much simplified and we are all finding the room a nicer place to work and learn."



Reading Fluency

Fluency is usually defined as the rate (words per minute) and accuracy (number of words correctly identified) of a student's reading of material at his/her independent reading level. You could call it reading automatically - thinking about the meaning rather than the individual words.

We want our students to read using the correct phrasing. A lot of the comprehension of the material comes through the proper phrasing and expression used with changes in pitch and emphasis. This is called prosody, or the rhythms and tones of spoken language. Whether text is being read silently or aloud, much of its meaning comes from the way it sounds.

As students recognize sight words and learn to decode quickly, they begin to read text in a way that sounds like natural speech. Daily oral reading helps to develop this skill as the student is able to listen to his/her voice and hear the phrasing and the sound of the words read smoothly.

"I tried making fluency sentence strips with my computer, printing 3 or 4 sentences on the page the length of the paper (11 in.). I am really pleased with this idea! The kids can take a number of the words in with one eye scan and this is needed for fluency. Why didn't I think of this years ago? I make strips with sentences or phrases containing the new vocabulary for that story. Sometimes we cut the strip into word parts, mix the words and then practice putting the sentence back together. For a centre, I put the cut words of a sentence into an envelope, the child picks an envelope, re-forms the sentence and then prints it out in an exercise book."

"We practice re-reading a story several times using good inflection and expression in my Guided Reading lessons. I stress the correct phrasing, reading several words as one unit: 'in the house', 'at school', 'I am going', etc. I find this really helps to promote fluent reading."

"Some of the children come to me at the beginning of Grade Two already reading fluently, but I often have at least two-thirds that are not there yet. I try to have every child who hasn't reached this read aloud to me every day, and also read to an aide or other adult. Often these children do not read well to themselves in SSR time, so I need to be sure that they are getting all the practice they need to begin to read fluently."

"It is my opinion that many children will have problems with comprehension until they begin to read fluently. They are putting all the effort into word recognition and decoding - as it should be. Once they are reading fluently I then stress comprehension techniques."



Ideas to Promote Fluency:

- Do extensive daily oral reading.
- Re-read phrases, sentences and short paragraphs until fluent.
- Read a paragraph silently and underline groups of words that go together.
- Practice reading with expression.
- Do timed readings, trying to improve speed.
- Model fluent reading often.
- Echo reading - the teacher reads a passage and the student tries to imitate the fluency.
- Tape record and listen to the reading. Discuss how it can be improved.
- Do choral reading with less capable readers working with the fluent readers.
- Re-read books, songs and poems.
- Do Readers Theatre.
- Neurological impress: the teacher reads slightly ahead of, and louder than, the student.

Getting Their Attention

Children have perfected listening to a fine art! They shut out what they don't want to hear and can hear a whisper of something they want to hear. For example, they shut out a parent or teacher who nags, saying things over and over - and they can hear a whisper of 'ice cream' or a treat from across the room. This being true, we want our attention getters to be interesting, varied and fun - to make it worth while stopping and listening.

"I hung wind chimes from the ceiling over my desk. Then I have a 'magic' wand and when I want attention I use the wand to tap the chimes. There is a lovely sound, and the students all become quiet to listen."

Here is a list with a variety of attention getters:

- Say: 1, 2, 3 - Eyes on me!
- Ask the children to smile at you - or wink, or wiggle their eyebrows or put a finger on their noses, etc. The motion must be silent and not too silly.....
- Say: 'Repeat after me.....' and then a sentence that describes the behaviour or action that you want. This gives a repetition of the direction as the students say it back.
- Turn off and on the lights to signal clean-up time.
- Buy a doorbell with a remote button. Put the remote in your pocket and ring the doorbell when you want to get the students' attention.
- Tap a cow-bell with a small metal rod or ring it.
- "We made rainsticks from cut pieces of gift-wrap rolls, filling them with beans and rice and decorating them. I shake the one I made for an attention getter."
- Do clapping patterns - e.g. - clap, clap clap clap, clap (1-3-1), etc. The students repeat the pattern that you clap.
- Say softly, "Put your hand up if you hear me." As some of the nearer students do this and become silent, repeat it softly so the rest of the class hear. Vary the order - put your hands on your head, clap once, sit on the floor, put your hand on your mouth (or eyes), etc.
- Use seasonal toys that talk - a black cat that meows for Halloween, a laughing Santa for Christmas, etc.
- Get a tap-on battery-powered wall light at Home Depot or similar store. Attach it at the front of the classroom. When you want attention, tap it and turn on the light. This is a nice quiet way to get attention.
- Say, 'Give me five!' One is to be silent, two is to sit down, three is to fold the hands, four is to have feet on the floor, and five is to look at the teacher.
- 'Give me five' can mean the five words 'stop and look at me!'
- If you want instant quiet, say 'Freeze!' - with eyes on you.
- Softly begin to sing a song that the class knows, and they begin to sing with you.
- Use a variety of musical instruments to get attention.
- Begin to whisper so the students have to be very quiet in order to hear.
- Give verbal recognition to students listening well, sitting quietly or any desired behaviour.



"Thank you, John, for sitting so quietly!" "I see that Emily is ready for sharing time!"

Sharing Time

"I call it 'Share and Care'. One child shares each day, and the rest of the class 'cares' by asking questions or giving a compliment. We practice manners, and saying nice things to each other - and then saying 'thank you' for compliments."

"I teach a split class of grade twos and threes. I have one Sharing Journal. This is taken home each day by a student. They write about what they want to share or write questions so the class can guess their sharing object. When we do sharing time, it is more like an 'author's chair' as the person reads from the Sharing Journal what he/she wrote the evening before. Then the other students have a brief chance to ask good questions and the sharing student gets a chance to discuss the object further."



"I was not a fan of 'Show and Tell'. It took valuable time out of the day and often I was not sure of the benefit. I decided to try to make it as valuable as possible and now I have a twenty minute block on Friday afternoon when the students get a chance to share what is happening in their lives. They may bring something to share, but toys are forbidden! This is part of the Language block, a speaking and listening component.

I teach them what good speakers do - stand straight, look at the audience, speak clearly - and never run on and on. We also learn what good audience members do - listen carefully, look at the speaker, and ask thoughtful questions. The speaker gets complimented for the things he/she did well - first by me and later in the year by the class. I now find that my class will ask sensible thoughtful questions to the visitors to the school who put on performances instead of the silly questions that some children ask!"

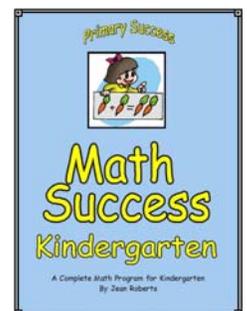
"I have Science sharing every two weeks. The students bring in interesting items that are conducive to discussion. Some we have had are: a feather, fossils, a bone, rocks with crystals, a bird's nest, a snake skin, etc. The kids love these sessions and look forward to them. They like to think of something interesting to bring. This opens the discussion of the object and gives a good 'teaching moment'."

"I do sharing every Friday afternoon. I have a calendar that gives a specific topic for each Friday. Occasionally there will be a 'free sharing' time, where the kids can share any topic."

The Math Success Program

Primary Success Publications has an original math program that has been proven to work very well! Schools that use it report that their math scores have increased and the students are far ahead. The program uses strategies that increase understanding and give students alternative ways to approach math procedures that suit different learning styles. This program is for Kindergarten through Grade Three. Math Success is a complete program with teaching strategies, lesson plans, student practice sheets and assessment.

Go to our website to see sample lessons!



"I have been teaching for 14 years and have never had a group of Grade Twos come this far in Math ever. I totally love this program!"

Math Ideas

"I had the district crew paint several large number lines to 20 on our concrete playground area. In our math times, we often go out and jump out problems and questions. I have found it really helpful! We also use the ladder on the playground slide to show 'going up' and 'going down' the numbers."

"We make many different kinds of number lines. We use clothes pins on a string across the chalkboard, stepping stones on the carpet, paper clips on a chart holding the numbers, and game boards like 'Chutes and Ladders'. I find that extensive work in hopping forward and back through the numbers give the kids a much better understanding. Each student has a number line on the desktop, too.

We have daily lessons saying, "We are standing on the largest number. Which way will we hop?"

"I think the most powerful part of my math lessons is the feedback time at the end. We take a few minutes for the students to tell what they have done and learned in the period. This seems to crystallize the procedures, when a child has to put the concept into words."

Word Problems

"I model this procedure almost every day until the kids know it by heart. Then we do #3, #4 and #6 in our math journals.

1. Read the word problem. What facts does the problem give?
2. Re-read the **question**. What does it ask?
3. Draw a simple picture to show the problem and the answer.
4. Write the equation and solve it.
5. Re-read your question. Does the equation answer it?
6. Print a word sentence to answer your question."



Counting Money

"We count money by putting the alike coins together. Count the coins that are worth most first, then the next, until lastly the pennies. If we have two dimes, three nickels, one quarter and three pennies, we practice putting them quarters first, then dimes, nickels and pennies. Then we would say, "25, 35, 45, 50, 55, 60, 61, 62, 63."

I found that my kids needed extra practice counting by 10s on the 5 numbers - 5, 15, 25, 35, etc., and in counting on, but they enjoy adding up groups of coins."

Primary Success Publications Seasonal Art Books

Art Through the Year

Here are hundreds of great primary art ideas and activities! This book contains art ideas for Autumn, Halloween, Christmas, Winter, Valentines, Spring and Easter; and Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Groundhog Day and St. Patrick's Day, too. Your children will have fun doing the wonderful projects. This is a great collection!

The BIG Christmas Book

This book has poetry, art, Christmas concert ideas, ways to integrate the holiday into the curriculum, gifts for parents, bulletin boards, 'Christmas Around the World' and lots more. Now everything for the holiday is in one place!

Good Ideas

The Giving Tree

What can the parents donate to your classroom? Some teachers put up a tree at Christmas, and decorate it with ornaments, each with a donation item. The parent can take the ornament, sign a list and then donate the item.

Here are some ideas:

Post-it notes, notepads, stickers, old (suitable) magazines and catalogues, wikki sticks, books, awards, coloured copy paper, collections of items suitable for math manipulatives, lego, plasticene, board games, puzzles, baby wipes, cotton balls, pipe cleaners, clear contact plastic, feathers-beads-lace, etc., stamps and stamp pads, skipping ropes, balls, hula hoops, and school supplies. Art and craft supplies are always welcome, and extra pencils and erasers for children who are unable to bring more. The parents can also bring empty aluminum foil tubes or gift wrap tubes (not toilet paper), empty milk jugs for an igloo project, empty margarine containers with lids, and much more!



More Good Ideas

"I laminate blank tags for cubbies and desktops. Then I use felt pen to write on top of the lamination. These can be wiped clean and used again and again."

"If you write over top of permanent marker with a dry erase marker and then erase, both the dry erase and the permanent marks come off. You sometimes need to do it twice, but it works."

"To do name tags on desks, I put a piece of packing tape on the desk, write on it and put another piece of tape on top. To change name tags I just lift the tape and do it again."

"I have a specific lesson in the art of passing out papers! My Grade Twos sit in rows, but I would do a similar lesson for tables. I hand enough papers for the students in the row to the front person. He/She takes one and hands the pile back, and the next person does the same. Handing in papers is the opposite. The back person hands his paper to the person in front of him, that person adds his paper and hands the two forward, etc., until all the papers reach the front. The front person puts the pile where it should go.

This sounds easy and obvious - but for some reason it never goes as smoothly as it should until I teach the specific lesson!"

I use a yellow highlighter dot on my originals—which makes it easy for new teachers or student teachers to help themselves to "extra" worksheets in my filing cabinet, without me having to worry about losing originals. It's a great way to cull the extra sheets that build up over time, and it helps others out, too.

Homework Calendars for 2011 - 2012

Teachers and parents love this great resource! The children take a photocopied page home each month. The calendar gives them an interesting educational activity to do each day, suitable for the grade. This gives the children homework to do, but there is no preparation or marking for the busy teacher. Homework Calendars are available for Kindergarten, Grade One, Two and Three.

Christmas Ideas

"I cut out a very large green tree from butcher paper. The top is at the top of the bulletin board and the bottom is near the floor. I had to cut two halves so it is almost twice the width of the paper. I added a brown trunk at the floor. Then I strung the little white Christmas tree lights back and forth on the tree. We do a lot of Christmas art projects, and the class makes several different tree ornaments that are tacked to the tree.

Different years we decorate the tree differently. One year I put large pinwheel poinsettias on it. Another we made ball ornaments with the children's pictures on them. There are lots of ideas. I always get lots of compliments on the tree!"

"Our art teacher cut out large green trees, one for each class from K to 7, and put them up in the central hall. Now every class has to decorate their tree. They look wonderful when they are all done!

We did this last year, too, and moved them to the gym walls for the Christmas concert and they were a big hit."

"On the last day of November I send home a large Christmas Tree pattern with each child. I call this their 'Holiday Homework'. Together with their family they are to decorate the tree using any items found in their home. The trees come back beautifully decorated and make a wonderful holiday hall display."

"I found some bare tree branches about five feet tall. I painted them white and stuck them in some ready-mix concrete in a middle-sized flower pot. I have these up all year with little white lights on them and decorated with seasonal things. At Halloween I have orange lights and black bats on the tree. At Christmas I have lights with mixed colours, and the children make decorations for the tree - hanging ornaments and real candy canes. It is a focal point in the classroom and the kids love it."

Put a simple black outline of a Christmas shape under wax paper. Trace around the shape with liquid glue, making a thick line and closing the shape. Sprinkle fine glitter into the glue. When it is dry, peel it off the paper and hang with a ribbon.

I am always excited when I see something new - new to me, at least..... in my grandson's grade two classroom they made sugar cookies with 'stained glass' centers. They had cut out large round cookies and then used a small cookie cutter to cut a shape out of the center of each - a tree or bell, etc. Then the teacher used a hammer to smash yellow lifesavers into a powder. When the cookie was on the baking sheet, she sprinkled the powdered candy into the cookie centers. As they baked, the centers melted into a gold sheet that was translucent. The teacher said that she had been doing this for years, and did the same thing to make windows for gingerbread houses. She said that she had tried it with other candy, but lifesavers was the only one that worked. She was only using yellow today, but there are lots of colours..... Neat!

Count down the days until Christmas with a paper chain. Take off a loop each day. This can be done in the classroom at calendar time, and also sent home for the family to do.



Odds and Ends

From a Grade One teacher: "Please, please, please teach your Kindergarteners to form the letters correctly! I get kids coming to Grade One making letters from the bottom up and circles clockwise. By the time they get to me it is very difficult to change them!"

You will find many of your children with poor grammatical habits. It is already difficult to change speaking habits, but with practice and daily follow-up we can try to make a difference.

Perhaps the worst grammatical error is 'me and my friend!' You will hear this in sharing time and see it written in Journals.

Print 'Me and my friend went to school.' on the chalkboard. There are two children. What would you say if your friend didn't come? Erase 'and my friend'. What does the sentence say now? 'Me went to school!' That sounds like baby-talk! Act this out with two children and then one and see how silly it sounds. We would say 'I went to school' and if a friend came with you it would only be polite not to push yourself ahead of your friend - you should let the friend go first - 'My friend and I went to school.' Give all your students a chance to roll play and practice saying it correctly. After this, have the children self correct every time you hear the 'me and.....'

"When my whole class is due for a privilege, we have a 'Cuddle Up and Read' afternoon. The children bring blankets or light sleeping bags, a favourite stuffed toy. We have done it with pajamas and slippers, but that isn't necessary. I collect a selection of great books from the school library. The desks are moved to one side and we cuddle up and read and read and read. It is great to promote the idea of reading as a wonderful treat and the kids love it."

"I like to make 'good' phone calls to the parents. The children are very pleased and so are the parents, especially when they hear my voice on the phone they are expecting news that is not so positive! I also send happy notes home with the students."

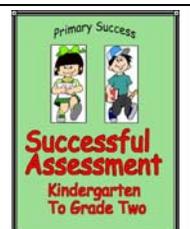
The November Miracle

Well do I remember the terrible feeling in October! Here two months have gone by and the children have learned NOTHING! In the words of a Grade One teacher.....

"Our Grade One teachers were just talking yesterday about how 'needy' our children are and remembering what we call the 'November Miracle'. It seems every year, even though we know better, about the end of October we start saying things like, "These kids haven't learned a thing!" or "I have worked so hard and they haven't understood anything!" "They haven't heard a thing I've said. They'll never be readers!" "They can't read, they can't print, they can't even use scissors! What have I been doing?" Then along comes the end of November and you see those huge smiles as suddenly they are reading words, phrases and then sentences on their own! It's like a miracle every year!"

Successful Assessment - Kindergarten to Grade Two

There are tests and assessments for math, reading, phonics, spelling, and other subjects. This binder includes assessment check lists, screening sheets, running record sheets, writing standards, and more. There are report card comments and sample interim report cards. This is a very useful resource!



Odds and Ends

"I find that limiting the options for the students when in the classroom on in-days helps to keep order. I often have a large jigsaw puzzle on a table, and I bring out the math games. They can play Chutes and Ladders, card games and simple board games. I teach the directions first, so there are no arguments about rules. Then they can read on comfy cushions. I also put out puzzle sheets and I encourage the children to bring an empty scrap book or other book to draw in. For the first few in-days, I either stay in the classroom or pop in frequently to make sure all is going well. After the bell goes and it is school time again, we have a drink of water and do exercises for a few minutes."

"I have a list on my computer of all my favourite read-alouds. I add to it whenever I find another great book. Each year I bold and underline the entire list, and then put each book into regular print as I read it to my children. This way I am able to look at my list, choose a book that has not been read, and go to the library and grab it quickly. I find that this saves me lots of time of hunting through books to find one that might be suitable."

Tired of calling reading time SSR (sustained silent reading) or, as my school called it U.S.S.R (even worse - uninterrupted sustained silent reading)? Here are a few more acronyms that are more interesting:

BEAR - Be Excited About Reading

DEAR - Drop Everything and Read

WEB - Wonderfully Exciting Books

OTTER - Our Time To Enjoy Reading

GRAB - Go Read a Book

RABBIT - Read a Book Because it's Terrific

RIOT - Reading is our thing

ZYLAR - Zip Your Lips And Read



Popular Primary Success Resources!

Successful P.E.

This new primary book has lesson plans, gross motor activities, skill training, indoor and outdoor games galore - and lots of ideas to make your P.E. lessons fun and successful. There are helpful ways to organize your P.E. periods, too. There are exercises, classroom breaks and games for recess. This book is suitable for teachers from Kindergarten to Grade Three. Order it now!

Successful Phonics -

Part 1 (Grade One) and Part 2 (Grade Two and Three)

This program gives you everything you need to teach phonics successfully. Part 1 teaches the single consonants, the short vowel sounds and the digraphs—and Part 2 all the rest of the sounds. There are specific daily lesson plans, strategies for teaching the sounds and blending, reproducible reading sheets, flashcards, and booklets so the children can practice their skills in actual reading material.

Successful Science Lessons and Successful Social Studies

These books for Kindergarten, Grade One and Grade Two are very popular. All your lessons are laid out for you, with a worksheet for the students and lots of extra ideas to expand your lessons. Everything you need is there for you, and teachers are thrilled with the easy-to-teach sequential lessons!

The Successful Sight Reading Program

This series is widely used in the classroom, especially for the children who are slower to learn to read. These books give them the needed repetition and give you many strategies to help them learn. These books are also popular with Special Education teachers, as they are easy to teach and contain everything needed for success. For more information, go to the Primary Success website.

Successful Sight Reading - Part One / Part Two / Part Three / Part Four

This program is very popular and is being used with great success, both in the classroom and in Learning Assistance rooms with students who have difficulties with early reading. The Successful Sight Reading books have daily lesson plans, with lots of teaching strategies and practice sheets. It has everything you need to teach beginning reading successfully! Part One teaches the first 100 sight words so that your Grade One students soon become readers, and Part Two teaches the next 150 words. Part Three and Four continue the sequential program. It is well organized, simple to follow and the program has proven results.

Little Books to Accompany Successful Sight Reading - Part One / Part Two / Part Three

These binders each have more than 50 little books for you to photocopy for your students. These little books match the lessons in Successful Sight Reading - Part 1, 2 and 3. These will give your children the extra reading practice that they need, and the little books are fun, too!

"My children's reading has greatly improved with the Successful Sight Reading program! Thanks for this wonderful resource!" R.M.

"I am impressed with how quickly the students were able to read using the reading programs!" K.B.

Successful Phonics - Part 1 / Part 2

These books will give you everything you need to teach phonics successfully. Part 1 is a complete phonics program for Grade One and Part 2 is for Grade Two/Three. There are specific daily lesson plans, strategies for teaching the sounds and blending, reproducible reading sheets, flashcards, and reproducible booklets so the children can practice their skills in actual reading material. Successful Phonics is easy to teach, and is explained in simple lessons.

Go to the website for samples and book prices.



Favourite Websites

Great reindeer ideas: some really cute reindeer heads you can make. This page is a great resource - but very slow to download!!

<http://kinderkorner.com/reindeer.html>

http://www.susanmdailey.com/santa_clothes.htm

A readers' theatre story, with story pieces to help act it out.

<http://www.mrsnelsonscass.com/teacherresources/themat icunits/worldholidays.aspx>

It is a long URL, but the site has a complete 'Holidays Around the World' unit.

<http://www.eslkidstuff.com:80/ChristmasGames.htm>

Primary Success Publications

4971 Fillinger Crescent

Nanaimo, BC V9V 1J1

E-mail:

primarysuccess@shaw.ca

Website:

<http://www.primarysuccess.ca>



Phone:

1-800-758-0889

Fax:

250-758-2661