Reading – Going to the Dogs

By Suzanne Davidson

Reading Education Assistance Dogs (R.E.A.D.) is a literacy support program where children read on a one-to-one basis with registered therapy dogs and their owners. Intermountain Therapy Animals launched R.E.A.D. in 1999 and volunteer pet-partner teams have been reading with children throughout the United States and Canada ever since! This award-winning program has been written about in publications such as the Wall Street Journal, and national magazines like Time, Parenting, and Family Circle. In addition, R.E.A.D. has been featured on Animal Planet and on the Westminster Dog Show.

A small pilot study in Salt Lake City, Bennion Elementary School, measured the success of the program. The study revealed not only an increase in reading comprehension (as much as two to four levels over 15 months) for most children, but many other benefits were noted. The program was correlated with reduced school absenteeism, improved relationships with peers, improved self-confidence, and even improved personal hygiene.

But how does reading to a dog accomplish all of this? Reading to these special animals is fun! Their presence motivates youngsters and they feel safe and relaxed in the company of the animal. The dogs listen attentively; they do not laugh, criticize, or judge. Furthermore, the children do not see this as a remedial program. The R.E.A.D. experience allows the children to see themselves as tutors and helpers for the dog. R.E.A.D. works! In the words of Bill Moyers, R.E.A.D. is one of those ideas that “pierces the mundane to arrive at the marvelous.”

Please visit the website http://www.therapyanimals.org/R.E.A.D.html to learn more or check R.E.A.D. out on Facebook.
An Interview with Suzanne Davidson

By Kathi Bartle Angus

KBA: How did you get interested in the R.E.A.D. program?

SD: I have to confess I haven’t gotten to the point where I am fully participating yet; my dog is still in training. But I have used my dog to support my students that I tutor as part of her training. My dog was trained as a Pet Therapy Animal with the organization Pet Partners. While participating in this program one of the mentors asked if I would be interested in the R.E.A.D. program. Obviously as a reading teacher I said, YES!

KBA: What kind of training have you participated in?

SD: First, we participated in a full day orientation that taught me to speak “dog,” I learned to “read” body language and behaviors. Then we attended obedience classes together with one of the organization’s trainers. Once I felt Juneau, my golden retriever, was ready we went to the 10-step evaluation at UCI Medical Center. The dog has to pass all 10 steps of the examination and I had to learn my role as the dog’s advocate. My job is to see to the dog’s needs in any interaction. I also have to make sure my dog is very well groomed before she participates in any therapy interactions.

The next step was to learn the R.E.A.D. training. This training is provided by Intermountain Therapy Animals organization. The human part of the partnership has to learn the protocols and pass an exam to show proficiency. On a side note: other animals can participate, there are registered birds and cats. Now, Juneau and I are in the observation stage, it’s a bit like student teaching. Juneau has learned that once she has her vest on she is now in working mode.

KBA: What kinds of environments do the dogs work in?

SD: The dogs work in schools, libraries, hospitals, children’s group homes, and even juvenile justice facilities. Many libraries have programs that run on a once a month basis. In a school setting the dogs usually come once a week to the same classroom over a fixed period of time. When the program started it was primarily for K-3 students, but now we have found that older students enjoy reading to the dogs too.

KBA: Is there anything you would like to add?

SD: Yes, one thing that I found important as I got started was learning that Pet Partners carries a substantial insurance policy on the part of their teams. This alleviates the worry that owners may be at risk financially if there is a problem. Also, the program is very careful to make sure all participants are current in their training. Recertification is required every 2 years.

Suzanne Davidson (09 - PYLUSD cohort) retired a few years ago as a classroom teacher. She is currently working in private practice and as one of the alumni tutors in the Croy Reading Center at CSUF. To learn more about R.E.A.D. and her experiences, she can be reached at davidson.suzanne7@gmail.com
Croy Reading Center News

This fall the Reading Center virtually hummed with activity. We were at capacity and working with community students, ages 8 to 14. The students come to us mostly by word of mouth and have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a graduate student in his or her final semester or one of our exceptional alumni tutors.

Natalie A. is a wonderful example of the students at the Center. Natalie is a 4th grader who joined us at the Reading Center on the recommendation of her school principal and program alumna, Heather Bosworth. Natalie had missed much of her second grade year due to severe illness and was struggling to keep up on return to regular school. After 2 semesters at the Center, Natalie was once again at grade level in her literacy performance. She is an absolute delight with a gift for poetry and a love of all things related to Paris, France, which she hopes to visit. We were grateful to have an opportunity to make a difference for Natalie.

Many of the students at the Reading Center qualify for scholarships to cover all or part of the Center fee of $300 per semester. Anyone wishing to donate to the fund for Reading Center scholarships can do so by contacting Kathi Bartle Angus, Associate Director, at kangus@fullerton.edu or 657-278-3735.

Alumni Showcase

Heather Krstich (2014)
Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA)
Edison Elementary
Anaheim City School District, CA

In my current position, I have been using my many skills developed in the Reading Program (especially clinic!) to write reports for the intensive needs students I work with. I have introduced the teachers at my school site to using Informal Reading Inventories and miscue analysis to help identify literacy goals beyond just increasing the words per minute on DIBELS Oral Fluency timed readings!

I have approached my principal and based on my recommendations she is finding money in the budget to purchase connected text for the second and third grade intensive reading groups. This will be a great asset to the program.

I am so happy at my position, and have found the skills I learned in the program have allowed me to be an impactful and well-informed advocate for both students and teachers at my school site! I just couldn’t be happier with my position and school!

To connect, you can reach Heather at krstich2@gmail.com

Congratulations to Zoila Gallegos!

Zoila Gallegos (2012) was recognized as one of the top 16 Los Angeles County Teachers of the Year for 2015. She has been a teacher for 23 years and is currently working as a literacy specialist at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall School. She has clearly distinguished herself in this challenging and rewarding role. A statement by Frederick Douglass, “Once you learn to read, you will be forever free,” drives Zoila’s mission as a literacy specialist. At Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall School she works each day to inspire troubled youth to strive toward a better future. Other alumni who attended class at CSUF with Zoila will remember the passion that drove her to do her very best to facilitate literacy learning for her students.

The recognition event was held on Sept. 18 at the Hilton Hotel in Universal City. At the event LACOE Superintendent Arturo Delgado, stated that the recipients represent the best among the 72,000 K-12 educators in Los Angeles County. The recipients were recognized as outstanding educators who have served with praiseworthy distinction.
Tech Talk by Dr. Brad Biggs

App Ideas
In their recent book, Richard Beach and David G. O’Brien talk about how we literacy educators can think in new ways about literacy instruction with apps (Beach & O’Brien, 2015). Apps, of course, are those computer applications that have multiplied like rabbits across all our digital mobile devices. Here’s one of their many good ideas: Choose the app that gives the best affordances (benefits) for your lesson’s learning objectives.

Beach and O’Brien used an equation to get their idea across. Which one would you choose?

Option A: **App affordances → Learning activity**

Option B: **Learning activity → App affordances**

Since you’re no doubt a good teacher, and since you read the last sentence of the paragraph up there, I bet you picked B. And that’s the smart choice, say Beach and O’Brien. When we use tech, they say, we should never use it just because it’s there, or because somebody said it was the next best thing, or because “we’re growing 21st century citizens” in our classes. Their advice? Consider our learning objectives, the knowledge and skills we want to build, and then choose apps that help us do that. Sometimes those apps can help us do that in new and exciting ways, and sometimes the apps can even open up learning in ways we hadn’t yet considered.

P.S. One of our members has had a great experience with an app and teaching writing with first grades. Ask Matt Harris!


App Recommendations
Here are a few apps fellow member Trish Carter-Anderson has shared:

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<tr>
<th>Suggested Tool</th>
<th>Short Description</th>
<th>Link to Overview Document</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make Beliefs Comix</td>
<td>MakeBeliefsComix.com is an educational comic strip creator from author Bill Zimmerman</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/14zQg_obmlu9S4-6vstRY1-NbxOjnBTi8yLs0EC2Wvw/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/14zQg_obmlu9S4-6vstRY1-NbxOjnBTi8yLs0EC2Wvw/edit?usp=sharing</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Powtoon</td>
<td>Software tool that combines presentation and animated cartoon to create content that is visually engaging, appealing and fun to design.</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c0dwHdTxOpi5f_OU386BkD58nOSTrv5Bp5FS6u75j4/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c0dwHdTxOpi5f_OU386BkD58nOSTrv5Bp5FS6u75j4/edit?usp=sharing</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Haiku Deck</td>
<td>A presentation tool that is versatile and easy to use by both teachers and students</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GQsFKxNW5wpq6TGmYvpuOY0ome6TkyPlmuB4Iv9D_J1k/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GQsFKxNW5wpq6TGmYvpuOY0ome6TkyPlmuB4Iv9D_J1k/edit?usp=sharing</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Google Slides</td>
<td>An online presentation app used to create, edit, collaborate, and present wherever you are.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFrX987YKY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFrX987YKY</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Google Classroom</td>
<td>Allow teachers to efficiently manage assignment and grading.</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/a/mysaddleback.org/presentation/d/1kcCqY1QtorfFaX3r8iMsz2Rhb26AHgo1cWdwMQsMFgo/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/a/mysaddleback.org/presentation/d/1kcCqY1QtorfFaX3r8iMsz2Rhb26AHgo1cWdwMQsMFgo/edit?usp=sharing</a></td>
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Honor an Educator
College of Education Event
April 17, 2016

The ‘Honor an Educator’ program was created in 2006 with two primary goals – to recognize educators who have made a difference in the lives of others, and to provide scholarships for current College of Education students. Alumni, faculty, and friends of the College are invited to submit names and honorees with a brief description of why they are being honored, along with a $100 donation to the scholarship fund in their honoree’s name. Honorees are sent a congratulatory letter from the Dean of the College, as well as an engraved photo frame as a permanent memento of thanks and appreciation of their outstanding contribution to excellence in education. Honoree’s names will be listed on the college’s website, along with donor’s names and descriptive paragraphs they wrote about the honorees.

For more information or to nominate an educator visit: http://ed.fullerton.edu/alumni/awards/honor-an-educator-awards/

REG Winter Breakfast

Presentation by
Dr. Brad Biggs
“Common Core and Content Area Vocabulary: What’s the Good Word in Vocabulary Study These Days?”

With an Opportunity Drawing to benefit the Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center

Book Exchange: Bring a book – Take a Book (or two, or three...)
Bring a Children’s Book, Novel, or Academic Book to Swap

Alta Vista Country Club
777 Alta Vista Street
Placentia, CA  92870
Saturday, March 19, 2016
9 a.m. check in, social time, raffle
9:30-11:30 a.m. buffet & program

See flyer insert to register or contact Teri Fitz-Maurice at tfitzmaurice@cox.net
The Reading Program alumni are involved in teaching, leadership, publishing, writing, training, tutoring, and a myriad of other activities that we know you want to know about. REG continues to fulfill one of the main missions of the organization - NETWORKING! REG would love to hear from you! Please contact Carlen Hessinger at carlen.le@gmail.com if you would like to share what you are up to in an upcoming issue.

Get connected!

Follow the Reading Department and The Reading Educators Guild on ...

Visit REG at http://ed.fullerton.edu/reg/

Reading Educators Guild Executive Board 2014-2016

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Membership benefits include:
• three newsletters each year filled with alumni, department, and literacy news
• information about REG events (sponsored speakers, social, networking)
• directory of current members
• opportunity to apply for annual professional materials grant
• opportunity to be included on Reading Department Tutor List

In addition your dues support:
• scholarships for Reading Center children
• scholarships for current graduate students
• Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center activities

The REG membership dues enable REG to make significant contributions to Reading Department students and the community through the Reading Center.

For more information about joining, renewing, or donating, please contact Matt Harris, Vice-President of Membership, at matt80s@yahoo.com or visit http://ed.fullerton.edu/reg/join-us/

Has your contact information and address changed? Please take a moment to update your information, if necessary. Contact Matt or visit the website listed above.