

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 646

CS 012 778

AUTHOR Boucugnani-Whitehead, Lynda; And Others  
 TITLE The Expanding Role of School Psychologists: Planning, Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Program To Prevent Early Reading Failure.  
 PUB DATE Mar 96  
 NOTE 6p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of School Psychologists (28th, Atlanta, GA, March 12-16, 1996).  
 PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*Counselor Role; \*Decoding (Reading); \*Early Intervention; Grade 1; High School Students; Primary Education; Program Effectiveness; Program Implementation; Reading Research; \*School Psychologists  
 IDENTIFIERS \*Phonemic Awareness; Phonological Awareness; Spalding County School District GA

ABSTRACT

A study examined the effectiveness of the Preventing Early Reading Failure Project in the Griffin-Spalding County School System (Griffin, Georgia) during the 1994-95 school year. The approach was based on research on phonemic awareness and phonological recoding. The treatment group of 39 first-grade students received classroom reading instruction based upon the intervention approach along with small group supplemental training 4 times a week, 10 minutes each session, by trained high school honor students. The matched control group of 39 students received traditional first grade reading instruction. Results indicated that after 24 weeks of intervention, the treatment group made significantly more progress in word decoding skills at the time of posttest. These students were also able to correctly read significantly more sight words than the control group. Findings emphasize the changing role of the school psychologist to include planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating effective intervention programs. (Author/RS)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

## ABSTRACT

**The Expanding Role of School Psychologists:  
Planning, Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating  
a Program to Prevent Early Reading Failure**

Lynda Boucugnani-Whitehead, Ph.D.  
Janice Kilburn, Ph.D.  
William Allen, Ph.D.  
Griffin-Spalding County School System  
P.O. Drawer N  
Griffin, GA 30224

This presentation introduced the key concepts of the Preventing Early Reading Failure Project, which was implemented during the 1994-95 school year. It highlighted the research study results and emphasized our experiences in planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating such a program within our school district. The empirical literature on early reading difficulties was studied. Then a reading program was designed to prevent early reading failure that was research-based, "user friendly", and inexpensive. The approach was based upon research on phonemic awareness and phonological recoding (PA/PR).

The effectiveness of the program on the reading achievement of "at-risk" first graders was evaluated. The treatment group (n=39) received classroom reading instruction based upon the intervention approach along with small group supplemental training for four times a week, ten minutes each session, by trained high school honor students. The matched control group (n=39) received traditional first grade reading instruction. Results showed that, after 24 weeks of intervention, the treatment group made significantly more progress in word decoding skills at the time of post-test. These students also were able to correctly read significantly more sight words than the control group.

The presentation emphasized the changing role of the School Psychologist to include planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating effective intervention programs.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND  
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL  
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

*L. Boucugnani -  
Whitehead*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

The Expanding Role of School Psychologists:  
Planning, Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Program  
to Prevent Early Reading Failure

Lynda Boucugnani-Whitehead, Ph.D.  
Janice Kilburn, Ph.D.  
William Allen, Ph.D.

The Preventing Early Reading Failure Project was developed by school personnel because of consistent and vocal concerns of teachers in the early elementary grades: “Too many of our students aren’t learning to read!” Research studies dealing with reading achievement were examined. “Phonemic awareness” and “phonological re-coding” were terms that were consistent and prevalent in the review of the research. Phonemic awareness is the ability to perceive a spoken word as a sequence of individual sounds (or phonemes). Phonological re-coding is a metacognitive strategy in which students identify and spell unfamiliar words by translating the phonemes (i.e., smallest speech units or sound categories) into graphemes (written symbols, such as letters or groups of letters that represent phonemes). Simply put, to be able to read, children must be able to understand that the spoken word can be translated into a sequence of individual sounds (phonemic awareness) and that these sounds can be translated into letters for reading and writing (phonological re-coding).

Studies have shown both correlational relationships and causal links between phonemic awareness and phonological re-coding and with reading. There also are studies showing that these learned skills transfer to other settings and that they persist for several years after actual training. There even is evidence that children with diagnosed reading problems also can improve their reading skills with such training.

With this information, an intervention approach was developed that was based upon research findings, was inexpensive to implement, and was “user-friendly” in terms of ease of training. Along with training teachers and paraprofessionals, Teacher Cadets (High School Senior honor students) also were taught how to use this approach.

With the help of the school system’s psychologists, teachers, and Teacher Cadets, a research project was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. (It was funded by two small grants.) All first grade students enrolled in either the treatment or control school were screened for reading problems. Forty-nine students from the treatment school were identified and matched with forty-nine students who scored similarly and were enrolled in the control school.

The treatment phase extended from mid-October 1994 to mid-April 1995. The treatment group received classroom reading instruction based upon the intervention approach along with individual or small group supplemental training in phonemic awareness and phonological re-coding (PA/PR) four times a week and ten minutes each session by the trained Teacher Cadets. The control group received traditional first grade classroom instruction in reading.

Data collection was conducted 24 weeks after the beginning of the program. While the treatment and control groups had similar word de-coding skills prior to the PA/PR instruction, the treatment group made significantly ( $p < .001$ ) more progress in word de-coding at the time of post-test. The treatment group also was able to correctly read significantly ( $p < .01$ ) more sight words than the comparison group. This suggests that the students who received the PA/PR training were able to generalize their word de-coding skills to reading actual words. These results indicate that the PA/PR training had a

significant and positive effect on the reading progress of the at-risk readers to such an extent that they actually were over-achieving! Both the word de-coding and the word recognition skill levels of these struggling young readers were above their grade level placement after receiving the intervention.

This project highlights how school psychologists can make a positive impact on children's development through programs that are broader and more systemic in nature than their traditional role generally involves. It provides a unique opportunity for the profession of school psychology. Because the formal education of school psychologists offers more research and program evaluation courses than does the training of other school personnel, school psychologists can take a leadership role in planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating school-based improvement programs. From a research perspective, field-based school psychologists often have an advantage over other researchers (e.g., university faculty) because they have opportunities to study several children engaged in important development tasks (in this case, learning to read) in one of their natural contexts. This, of course, is their schools.

An important role of the school psychologist, then, is to take important research and translate it into viable and practical strategies, interventions, and programs that work. School psychologists are in a particularly good position to take on this role. Their profession blends the psychological base of knowledge as it applies to children and schools with an expertise in research and development. Because they know schools better than most other researchers and because they know research better than other school personnel, school psychologists can lead the way in making the important link between research and the needs of children and schools. They make this link when they see children individually in their evaluation role (and that is important in and of itself). School psychologists also can make this link by developing programs that can improve the academic development of larger numbers of students.

### Selected References

Ball, E.W. & Blachman, B.A. (1991). Does phoneme awareness training in kindergarten make a difference in early word recognition and developmental spelling? Reading Research Quarterly, 26(1), 49-66.

Byrne, B. & Fielding-Barnsley, R. (1993). Evaluation of a program to teach phonemic awareness to young children: a 1-year follow-up. Journal of Educational Psychology, 85(1), 104-111.

Iversen, S. & Tunmer, W.E. (1993). Phonological processing skills and The Reading Recovery program. Journal of Educational Psychology, 85(1), 112-126.

Lewkowicz, N.K. (1980). Phonemic awareness training: What to teach and how to teach it. Journal of Educational Psychology, 72(5), 686-700.

Olson, M.W. (1990). Phonemic awareness and reading achievement. Reading Psychology, 11, 347-353.



U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



# REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

## I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: <i>The Expanding Role of School Psychologists: Planning, Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Program to Prevent Early Reading Failure</i>	
Author(s): <i>Boucugnani-Whitehead, L.; Kilbourn, J.; Allen, W.</i>	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date:

## II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following two options and sign at the bottom of the page.



Check here  
**For Level 1 Release:**  
Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Sample*  
\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 1

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2 documents



Check here  
**For Level 2 Release:**  
Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical), but *not* in paper copy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Sample*  
\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 2

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Sign here → please

Signature: <i>Lynda Boucugnani-Whitehead, Ph.D.</i>	Printed Name/Position/Title: <i>Lynda Boucugnani-Whitehead, Ph.D. Director of Psychological Services</i>
Organization/Address: <i>Griffin-Spalding Co. School System PO Drawer N Griffin, GA 30224</i>	Telephone: <i>770-229-3700</i>
	FAX: <i>770-229-3708</i>
	E-Mail Address:
	Date: <i>10-21-96</i>

---

**ERIC/Counseling and Student Services Clearinghouse**  
School of Education, 101 Park Building, University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
Greensboro, NC 27412-5001 (800) 414-9769

---

May 10, 1996

Dear NASP Presenter:

We are interested in reviewing the papers which you presented at the 28th annual convention of the National Association of School Psychologists, Atlanta, Georgia, March 12-16, 1996 for possible inclusion in the ERIC database.

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) is a federally funded, national information system that provides ready access to an extensive body of education-related literature. At the heart of ERIC is the largest education database in the world -- containing more than 900,000 records of journal articles, research reports, curriculum and teaching guides, conference papers, and books. It is available in many formats at hundreds of locations. Our goal is to improve decision making through increased access to information. To this end ERIC is at the forefront of efforts to make education information available through computer networks including the Internet, CompuServe, America Online, and more. ERIC users include teachers, counselors, administrators, researchers, policymakers, students, and other interested persons.

If your material is selected for inclusion, it will be duplicated on microfiche and delivered to more than 900 ERIC collections world-wide. Users of the ERIC system will have access to your documents through the printed index, Resources in Education (RIE), and the online ERIC database. Your documents, if accepted, will be announced to more than 3,000 organizations who subscribe to RIE. Furthermore, ERIC is one of the most regularly searched databases through commercial vendors. Inclusion in the ERIC database means that your documents will receive world-wide exposure, and at no cost to you. By contributing your documents to the ERIC system, you participate in building an international resource for educational information. Note that your paper may listed for publication credit on your academic vita.

We hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to share your work with other professionals through the ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services (ERIC/CASS). To submit a paper to ERIC/CASS for review and possible inclusion in the ERIC database, please send the following:

- (1) Two (2) laser print copies of the paper,
- (2) A signed reproduction release form, and
- (3) A 200-word abstract (optional)

Before sending, please check the completeness of your paper (e.g., data tables, graphs, reference lists, etc.). Any editorial changes must be made before sending papers to ERIC. Accepted papers are reproduced "as-is."

Previously published materials in copyrighted journals or books are not usually accepted because of Copyright Law, but authors may later publish documents which have been acquired by ERIC.

Please note that ERIC also accepts unsolicited papers for review and inclusion in the ERIC database. If you have any other papers you wish to submit, please photocopy the release form and send one release form with each paper submitted.

Please address your response to:  
Acquisitions Department, ERIC/CASS  
School of Education  
101 Park Building  
UNC at Greensboro  
Greensboro, NC 27412-5001