



## First Graders Succeed with My Reading Coach

An Interview with Diana Premer, Principal  
Ava Elementary School, Ava, Missouri  
498 students, K – 4, 70% disadvantaged  
Email: [dpremer@avaschools.k12.mo.us](mailto:dpremer@avaschools.k12.mo.us)

At the beginning of this past school year, first grade teachers came to me with a request: They wanted to put every first grader on My Reading Coach. After being introduced to the program, they were excited by its emphasis on phonics and eager to use it with their students. **As a result of their first graders' reading improvement, these teachers want their next class to have more time on My Reading Coach.**

### Getting Started

The first grade classroom aide created a computer lab schedule to include every first grade class. All first graders were able to use My Reading Coach 30 minutes twice a week. Ten students from one first grade would be on My Reading Coach in the computer lab; the remaining 10 would work on specific reading skills in the classroom.

First graders were excited to use the program. Once a week in our school's regular reading program, they had a free choice. Many chose to work on My Reading Coach.

### Successful First Grade Outcome

**Students gained one grade level in two semesters based on our reading text curriculum. The majority of students achieved 15 to 20 lessons on My Reading Coach.** Some got to lesson 30; and one student read at the 5.5 story level. The first grade teachers know the rules are sticking. The children are repeating the rules they learned from the Coach in class. During one of my classroom visits, I observed one first grader saying, "Coach Larrabee says....."

Special Education first graders did well too. They were on the program 1 hour during school each week and an extra ½ hour after school. They improved one grade level based on a pre and post test assessment. The Special Education teacher had all of her students tape their oral reading at the beginning and end of the year. The kids were tickled with the improvements they heard.

I believe it works for our first graders and other grades because 1) the children like to be involved with technology; 2) they like to receive individual praise often, and 3) they can progress at their own pace while interacting with a real person on the computer

screen. **First and second graders appear to be motivated by the praise; third and fourth graders thrive on their success as lessons pop up quicker.**

### Third Grade Reading Tutorial Successes

Several 3rd grade teachers used My Reaching Coach as part of an after school reading tutorial. Each student got 30 minutes on My Reading Coach and 30 minutes of one-on-one instruction with the teacher. With a total of 1½ hours per week on My Reading Coach (one hour in class), students' fluency increased tremendously after two semesters. It was a huge success. They also gained a grade level in reading.

One third grade boy was a below average student and was placed in the after school reading tutorial. He gained two grade levels by the end of his third year. He was so proud of his achievement! In fourth grade he achieved average or above in all subjects. His parents commented that he had a good year. **We are beginning to see that the kids who excel on My Reading Coach are showing an overall improvement in learning.**

### Future Plans

Although we didn't track improvement through appropriate testing, first grade teachers came to me and said, "We have got to start using this more; we have got to get it into our schedule."

I would like to improve the pre and post test assessments, encourage my teachers to assess oral reading and use all functions associated with the program. **My job is to work out a better schedule so that all the kids can have more time with this worthwhile reading program.** I would also like to see it used in the middle school for tutoring.

## FREE New Release – MRC Gold

The new version of My Reading Coach is available now.

It will:

- Speed up a student's progress!
- Simplify the reading process for English Language Learners!
- Improve student motivation!
- Display Class Reports on the screen!

**Details are on page 2.**

**Request your upgrade CD at**

[myreadingcoach.com/support/GoldV2Update.html](http://myreadingcoach.com/support/GoldV2Update.html)

## FREE New Release – MRC Gold

Available for download  
Windows version - May 2005

**To Speed up progress!** We are expecting to shorten student time on the program by 5 hours without sacrificing performance.

1. The Placement Test will end when a student scores 3 or less on three lessons in a row instead of three zeros in a row.
2. The Teacher can now set the ending story level so students get to grade level faster.
3. The Writing Introduction is now only heard a maximum of 3 times unless the student requests it.
4. The number of 10-word assignments have been limited to essential lessons only.
5. In the /j/ lesson, the G-I, G-E words “gin” and “gem” have been removed from the Writing and Word Building activities.

**For English Language Learners!** To help ELL students and those with Attention Deficit Disorder achieve quick progress, we have added an ELL setting. When set, it will...

1. Automatically set the Review Test Mastery Level of a student to 80%. (Non-ELL students are set to 90%.)
2. Turn OFF Lessons 21 (I-R, E-R, U-R), 30 and 31 (sight words) until the student achieves mastery of the remaining lessons in 1 – 46. Then they are introduced.
3. Have grammar activities not start until lesson 31. (Non-ELL students start grammar at lesson 7.)
4. Have reading comprehension not start until lesson 46. (Non-ELL students start comprehension at lesson 30.)
5. Skip the grammar Topic: Double - Duty Pronouns entirely.

**To Improve Student Motivation!** We have added more certificates.

1. There are now four grammar certificates. Students are given these certificates each time they master six grammar lessons.
2. There is now a Comprehension Certificate. Students who succeed at the reading comprehension level set by their teacher will receive a Reading Comprehension Certificate.

### For the Teacher!

1. Class reports can now be displayed on the screen.

## The Power of Monitoring (Part Three)

Tips from Marci Goforth  
Elementary Dyslexia Specialist for Victoria ISD  
Victoria, Texas  
Email: [marsha.goforth@visd.com](mailto:marsha.goforth@visd.com)

**Intervene when a student shows he is struggling on a lesson by repeating a lesson over and over or spending more than his average amount of time on the lesson.** This will reduce a student's frustration. Most students don't have a lot of strategies to find a correct answer. Many times they will continue typing the same incorrect word over and over again.

- Decide when to intervene based on the results of the Daily Class Lesson Plan. It indicates the status of a student's current lesson/activities.
- Determine when to use the off-the-computer Expert Sheet, Blackline Master-Challenge Sheets and/or Supplementary Lessons.

**Celebrate the student completing a Review Test with 90% accuracy with MRC certificates.** Students of all ages appreciate being recognized for their hard work and accomplishments:

- Announce to the class when a certificate is earned. Once students realize the effort required to earn these certificates, they will cheer and praise each other for their accomplishments.
- Allow students to take the certificate to the Principal, Assistant Principal, Counselor, or Office Staff to share accomplishment. Always explain the value of the certificate to school personnel before sending the student. Many times they will reward the student with a token gift, but praise works well too.
- Print the Student Certificate to take home on special paper. Then print another certificate on bright colored paper to post on the wall. Let the student pick the color. This has been a great motivator for middle school students!
- Post MRC Lessons in the form of a wall board game and have a student move his/her game piece to the last lesson mastered. Make the Board Game using 61 multicolored squares. Each square will have a lesson number (1-61). Laminate game board before attaching to wall. Each student will pick out a sticker to use as his/her game piece. Cut sticker out and peel off a small piece of the back cover at the top of the sticker. This makes it easy for the sticker to be removed and reapplied as the student progresses through the game.

## Help Us Help You!

Tip to share in the newsletter? Want to brag about your students? Have a question about the program? Something you would like us to change or improve?

Get answers to your questions or send your tips to [mail@mindplay.com](mailto:mail@mindplay.com)