Reading Specialist News

Dean-Hope Center
Teachers College - Columbia University
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October 2013

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New Staff Member
Molly Thompson has joined DH-CEPS as the Teaching Assistant to the Coordinator of Reading Services. She is in her first semester of the Reading Specialist Program. Recently, she graduated from Messiah College in Mechanicsburg, PA with a degree in Early Childhood Education and TESOL. She is excited about the opportunities available at TC. Molly is hoping to work as a Reading Specialist in an urban environment and is looking forward to helping the students and clients of the Center.

Reading Specialist Update

What was the last book you read for pleasure? Take a moment to remember what the book was about, why you liked it, and the pleasant experience of reading it. Beyond the enjoyment that comes from reading books we like, recent research suggests that there are important academic effects of reading for pleasure. This is a finding that can have important implications for the students we serve in our practicum.

How can students benefit academically from reading for pleasure? A new study, by Sullivan and Brown (2013), offers some answers. Based on longitudinal data, the researchers found that there was more growth in vocabulary, spelling and mathematics among children who read for pleasure at the ages of 10 and 16 than those who rarely read, even when statistically controlling for the effects of socio-economic status and parents’ reading behavior. The gains over time among children who engaged in leisure reading were especially strong for vocabulary knowledge. We know from assessment and intervention research how important implicit learning of vocabulary is for building reading comprehension skill. Reading for pleasure may be an especially rich source for such learning.

How can we help students with low reading skills develop the habit of reading for pleasure? This is certainly an enormous challenge. There is no one way to do this, but a start may be to discuss your experience in leisure reading with your client. Share your enthusiasm! It will be helpful for the client and the interventionist to engage in some very short parallel, independent reading, on a regular basis. For this, it will be important that the client read about a highly interesting topic. Take time to identify his or her specific interests. There is no need to use the reading for instructional purposes – the goal is only to allow the student to have a regular experience of reading interesting, independent-level text. This can create a pathway for the student to read for pleasure on his or her own, ideally selecting his or her own books, and reading for gradually longer periods over time. The results of this experience may strengthen the effects of the structured reading interventions you are providing to your DH-CEPS clients.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer a word of praise to all of the Reading Specialists who are diligently delivering reading assessment and intervention service to DH-CEPS clients. DH-CEPS (the Dean-Hope Center for Educational and Psychological Services) is a rare clinic in New
York City in providing high quality reading services to individuals who often would not be able to pay for them otherwise. Besides the beautiful space in which services are provided, we are proud of our extensive materials library, from which we select reading intervention material appropriate for individual clients’ needs. We are particularly grateful to the DH-CEPS Director, Dr. Dinelia Rosa, for her ongoing support in facilitating our reading services.

Keep up the good work, Reading Specialists, and convey your enthusiasm for reading for pleasure to your clients!

Dr. Dolores Perin
Professor of Psychology and Education
Coordinator of Reading Specialist Program at Teachers College, Columbia University


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**Kindles New to CEPS**

Thanks to the generous donation of Reading Specialist Alum, Cindy Sullivan (2005), there are three Kindles ready to be used when working with clients in CEPS. They will be stored in the Testing Library. Ask the center staff for a Kindle and sign it out as you would other materials in the black binder.

With the Kindle you can:

- Read a variety of texts
- Highlight words or phrases
- Refer to a built-in dictionary
- Annotate text and bookmark pages
- Adjust text sizes and font styles

**Rules for Kindle Use:**

1. The Kindles will be signed out on a first come, first served basis.
2. Kindles are not to be removed from CEPS.
3. Please only take one out immediately before your lesson to prep and return it promptly after the lesson. This will allow for more reading specialists to use them during lessons.
4. Always have a back-up plan in case the Kindles are not available.

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**Alumni News**

- **Tina Kafka** is working toward a doctorate in the Educational Leadership Program/Post-Secondary and Community College at San Diego State University.
- **Martine Gorevic** works with Citizens of the World Charter School as a Founding Principal, launching a new K-1 charter school in Crown Heights, Brooklyn this fall.
- **Caron Golemme-Cesa** graduated in 2012 with her Ph.D. in Language and Literacy from Fordham University. Currently, she is working as an adjunct professor.
- **Christine Salamone** is the coordinator of Tier 3 Reading Interventions in Special Education across Washington D.C. Public Schools. She is implementing a variety of new intervention programs.
- **Akira Stata** is enrolled in the Severe and Multiple Disabilities Annotation Program at the Warner School at the University of Rochester.