The Writing and Spelling Road to Reading and Thinking

Welcome to The Riggs Institute’s Writing and Spelling Road to Reading and Thinking teacher training in-person seminar or self study. You are about to embark on learning to teach what we believe to be one of the most comprehensive and effective language arts methods in the English-speaking world.

A staggering number of children in our nation and across the world now confront reading difficulties. According to the 1994 National Education Goals Report, Building a Nation of Learners, 90 million American adults now read and write at the two lowest of five levels of proficiency. This alarming statistic and the reading, writing, and spelling deficiencies of almost 40% of our enrolled students need not exist to the extent that they do.

Though the content to be taught and the order of such instruction to make successful readers of all of our children has not been proven through scientific research, there is an impressive body of empirical evidence to support our method’s content and sequencing. The efficacy of the instructional methodologies we use – direct, multi-sensory, and Socratic instruction, and explicitly taught phonics – are well documented. With this primary level (but widely-adapted-for-remedial) curricular design, The Riggs Institute is striving to chart a course for a return to teaching a completely integrated English language arts before any beginning learning style weaknesses can develop into full-blown learning disorders. Early instruction further provides an optimal educational opportunity for all students. Though we recognize that teaching English can be a complicated task, it need not be an unmanageable one. There are tools available, such as the phonetic structure of correct English spelling – with the rules of spelling, plurals, syllabication, grammar, and syntax – that can greatly simplify and streamline the process.

To enable you to teach reading, writing, and spelling effectively and easily, we will give you reliable content information to encompass: 1) how written symbols represent spoken sounds, 2) the structure and rules of English, 3) effective, time-saving sequencing and integration, and 4) effective teaching techniques to establish the cognitive development necessary for your students to become skilled readers.

Required Materials

For best results, whether you are training yourself and/or are involved in formal training seminars, you should have all the materials you need to complete this course: (this Training Manual, the Level I Teacher’s Edition, Phonogram Cards and Tape, a Reference Notebook, paper, red and black pencil, and a ruler). You may also supplement these supplies with the McCall-Crabbs Standard Test Lessons in Reading (comprehension), the audio CD of the revised Orton phonograms, The Spelling and Usage Dictionary, Margaret Bishop’s ABC’s and All Their Tricks, or many of the other excellent supplementary materials we carry to enhance and enrich this method.

The Purpose of Training

The purpose of training is to make you comfortable with the materials, to learn their organization, their use, and the exact teaching techniques they employ. For those of you who have completed a Riggs Institute teacher training course in the past, you will find that the Institute has made some changes and many additions to the program while at the same time retaining the same classic method and content. We hope this new text
will better serve you, the teacher, with easier-to-follow script and fewer books to move between while teaching. Levels II, III, and IV will be produced in 2000.

The Training Manual

This manual is designed to facilitate your training experience and study of *The Writing and Spelling Road to Reading and Thinking*. The Training Manual may be used for any of our training modules including: formal on-site seminars, future on-line classes, self-study, and our accredited correspondence practicum. This manual works as a guide, helping you to organize and to set and master the objectives of your training experience. For your optimal mastery of the method, it is important to assure that the lesson objectives, assignments, and assessments provided for each study session are accomplished. The reflection pages are to record any questions, concerns, or additional information you desire. Throughout the manual you will find research and other helpful articles in addition to our full K-7 Language Arts and Cognitive Development Course of Study. The latter are the goals to be accomplished with students as this method is taught.

Pre-Study Requirements

To get the most out of the time spent in your training class and to prevent you from feeling overwhelmed by the method itself, you are asked to complete a pre-study reading and study/assessment assignment. This is designed to provide you with much of the history, theory, and rationale behind the method, the teacher preparation necessary to implement this curriculum, and to cover the first few days of student instruction. In addition to the reading/study assignment, you are asked to study the first 55 phonograms and to become familiar with the techniques for teaching letter formation. A quiz of the 55 phonograms will be given as the formal training seminar begins unless other special provisions have been made due to time constraints, etc. If this preliminary work cannot be done for some serious reason, an extra day of formal training is normally required. Turn to page 12 for a complete list of the pre-study assignments.

A Research Compilation of Effective Training

Changing the way teachers are trained to teach reading is the primary objective of our non-profit agency. Fundamental to this objective is the meticulous use of the five proven components essential to effective teacher preparation—*theory, demonstration, guided practice, application, and constructive feedback*. Use of this validated training model has consistently produced teachers who can replicate the method in their classroom. Our five-part training classes begin with a comprehensive overview of the *theory* behind our method and materials. This is followed by the trainer's careful *demonstration* or modeling of the instructional processes (along with content) and by providing an opportunity for *guided practice* by all participants. The participant then applies the skills in real classroom teaching situations. Recommended follow-up Riggs training is a reliable means of completing the training with *constructive feedback*. If this isn't practical due to location or monetary constraints, the district or school might consider sending a candidate to become a Riggs-certified trainer. For more information, please call (503) 646-9459.

The Bruce Joyce/Beverly Showers research compilation is printed, with permission, on the next five pages. This will fully explain the rationale for our recommended model of training.