Empower™ Reading

Literacy Intervention Programs that Transform Struggling Readers into Capable Readers and Confident Learners

One-year multi-component intervention programs for elementary and secondary students.

Based on over 30 years of highly-regarded, rigorous research conducted by The Hospital for Sick Children

The Goals of Empower™ Reading

Empower™ Reading is a set of multi-component intervention programs that:

• Teaches struggling readers effective strategies for decoding and spelling words and understanding text.

• Allows students to experience success in reading and gain confidence in their skills.

• Helps students become independent readers equipped with multiple strategies.

• Empowers students to become active readers who read independently for meaning, information and pleasure.
Partnerships that help students who struggle with reading, become independent and active readers

Participating Schools/ School Boards

- Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- Peel District School Board
- Peterborough Victoria Northumberland & Clarington Catholic District School Board
- Provincial Schools Branch: Demonstration Schools
- Northeastern Catholic District School Board
- Waterloo Catholic District School Board
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- Toronto District School Board
- Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
- District School Board of Niagara
- Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto
- Algonquin-Lakeshore Catholic District School Board
- Vancouver School Board, British Columbia
- Brandon School Division, Manitoba
- Avon Maitland District School Board
- Suzuki Charter School (Edmonton)
- Kol Koreh Literacy Project
- Upper Canada District School Board
- Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board
- Montcrest School
- Olive Grove School
- Thames Valley District School Board
- Halton Catholic District School Board
- Near North District School Board
- York Region District School Board
- Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
- Grand Erie District School Board

Since 2006: >1100 teachers trained in, and >14,000 students received, Empower™ Reading

Empower™ Reading*

developed by

The Hospital for Sick Children’s

LEARNING DISABILITIES RESEARCH PROGRAM

Developing and evaluating methods of remediating language learning problems in children and youth

(>6500 children and adolescents with severe reading disabilities seen in our laboratory classrooms over the past 30 years)

* The research version of Empower™ has been known as the PHAST Reading Program
Reading disability is the *most common* developmental disorder of childhood affecting 10-15% of normally developing children.

- Literacy scores have dropped for young Canadians aged 16-25 whose parents had little education.
- Conference Board of Canada: Four out of 10 Canadians have literacy skills too low to be fully competent in most jobs in our modern economy.

Learning that is multidimensional and a focus that changes over time

**LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION**
- BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE (facts, concepts, etc.)
- VOCABULARY (breadth, precision, links, etc.)
- LANGUAGE STRUCTURES (syntax, semantics, etc.)
- VERBAL REASONING (inference, metaphor, etc.)
- LITERACY KNOWLEDGE (print concepts, genres, etc.)

**WORD RECOGNITION**
- PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS (syllables, phonemes, etc.)
- DECODING (alphabetic principle, spelling-sound correspondences)
- SIGHT RECOGNITION (of familiar words)

Hollis Scarborough (2003)
Interventions for severe reading disabilities

- Target Deficits (e.g., phonological; Pre-skill training)
- Motivational Profiles
- Transfer-of-Learning
- Metacognition
- Scaffolded Skills Instruction
- Attributional Retraining
- Cognitive Strategy Use

Was there transfer to uninstructed words?

Combined vs. Single Treatment Contrasts

Combined Treatments: Participants received instruction that combined phonological and strategy-based instruction.

Are these programs equally effective for students of differing SES, IQ, and language backgrounds?

Do program benefits extend to disadvantaged students?
To lower-IQ students?
To English language learners?

Did children of different SES levels make equivalent gains?
(N=211; No control group)

Did children of different IQ levels make equivalent gains?

(N=211; No control group)


Do children of different language backgrounds make equivalent gains?

Results from intervention studies with school-age children with RD

- Multiple component interventions associated with significant gains relative to controls on measures of decoding, word identification, passage reading, and reading comprehension
- Effects equivalent for children of varying SES, IQ, and primary language status
- The earlier the intervention, the greater the number of children normalized with remediation within a school year
- Motivational variables and motivational change critical factors


Empower™ Reading:
Instructional Programs & Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empower™ Reading Programs</th>
<th>Empower™ Reading Professional Development</th>
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</table>
| **For Grade 2-5 Students**
  reading below age-level expectations
| Decoding & Spelling Program
  • Includes all instructional manuals, student worksheets, readers, and support materials
  Comprehension & Vocabulary Program
  • Includes all instructional manuals, readers, student worksheets and support materials
| • 4 workshop days
  • Onsite Mentor Visits
  • Web-based support
  • Annual refresher training |
| **For Grade 6-8 Students**
  reading below age-level expectations
| Decoding & Spelling Program
  • Includes all instructional manuals, student worksheets, readers, and support materials
| • 4 workshop days
  • Onsite Mentor Visits
  • Web-based support
  • Annual refresher training |
| **For Grade 9-12 Students**
  reading below age-level expectations
| Decoding & Spelling and Comprehension & Fluency Program
  • Includes all instructional manuals, student worksheets, readers, and support materials
| • 4 workshop days
  • Onsite Mentor Visits
  • Web-based support
  • Annual refresher training |
For Whom Is Empower™ Designed?

Empower™ Reading: Decoding and Spelling programs are recommended for students who:
- are having significant difficulty acquiring age-appropriate reading skills, particularly decoding, word identification and spelling skills
- speak English as a first language or are English language learners
- have low average to above average cognitive ability
- attend school on a regular basis and do not have significant behavioural issues

Empower™ Reading™: Comprehension & Vocabulary (Gr. 2-5) is recommended for students who:
- have age-appropriate decoding skills, but struggle with text comprehension, and/or
- have significant difficulty with both decoding and text comprehension.

Empower Reading™: High School is recommended for students with:
- Word identification, decoding and/or reading comprehension standard scores < 85
- Reading and/or spelling scores on grade 7 CAT test <16th percentile.
- Reading at or below gr. 5 level on academic reading tests.
- Limited word reading vocabulary, poor letter-sound knowledge and decoding skills and/or poor reading comprehension skills.

Recommendations for Implementation of Empower™ Reading

- Teacher should instruct students in groups of 4 to 8
- Teacher should have access to a dedicated space to instruct their group(s)

Duration of programs and recommended frequency of instruction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades 2-5</th>
<th>Grade 6-8</th>
<th>High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decoding &amp; Spelling:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Decoding &amp; Spelling:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Decoding &amp; Spelling with Comprehension &amp; Fluency:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110 lessons;</td>
<td>90 lessons;</td>
<td>70 lessons;</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 min. per day;</td>
<td>45 min. per day;</td>
<td>75 min. per lesson;</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 days per week</td>
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<td><strong>Comprehension &amp; Vocabulary:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading &amp; Comprehension:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 lessons;</td>
<td>40 lessons;</td>
<td>60 lessons;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min per day;</td>
<td>25 min. per day;</td>
<td>45 min. per day;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days per week</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Designed to meet criteria for a Gr. 9 or 10 locally-developed credit (e.g., Locally-Developed English, GLS)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Empower™ Reading: Decoding & Spelling

Primary Level (Gr. 2-5);
Middle School Level (Gr. 6-8);
High School Level (Gr. 9-12)

Empower™ Reading
Key Instructional Features

- Prior knowledge
- Preskill mastery
- Teacher modelling
- Sequential and cumulative program
- Mass practice and cumulative review
- Eclectic and balanced instructional methods
- Scaffolded cognitive instruction
- Strategy dialogue training (self-talk)
- Explicit teaching of self-monitoring and strategy evaluation skills
- Attributional retraining
Empower™ Word Identification Strategies

- **Sounding Out:** strand
- **Rhyming:** limerick
- **Peeling Off:** unrelenting
- **Vowel Alert:** seam breath break bead head great
- **SPY:** dogwood

All levels of the Decoding & Spelling program introduce the same five strategies, but the rate of skill and strategy introduction is more rapid for older students and the program content and appearance is age-appropriate.

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Metacognition

- Thinking about thinking
- “Self-talk”, self-regulated learning
- Conscious awareness of strategy use
- Student understands strategies, can name and describe them, knows when to use them
- Game Plan: Choose, Use, Check, Score or Select, Apply, Monitor, and Evaluate
- Multi-strategic, flexible, and persistent
- Attributes success to strategy use
Weeding the garden is backbreaking work.

backbreaking

back: backbreaking
breaking: pack bead head great

Lesson 86

Soap Box Derby

- Chapter One -

Author: Lora Lee

It was time for the yearly soap box derby! It was the coolest contest in town. Kids from all over town entered the race hoping to be the big winner. Jill was brimming with joy. She had been waiting for this event all year.

Jill had spent endless weeks constructing her cart for the race. Unlike some kids in the contest, Jill had made her soap box cart all by herself. First, she had found wood for the body of the cart in the back of Granddad's hobby shop. Jill had sanded the wood down to make it smooth.

In her dad's toolbox, she had found some long nails, a few nuts and bolts, a hammer, and a socket set. She had hammered the nails into the wood and clamped the corners of the body with the nuts and bolts. Then, she and Granny had found some useable scraps at the fabric shop. Jill had cut the fabric into shapes that looked like...
Empower™ Reading: High School
A Secondary School Literacy Program

Designed to specifically address literacy learning problems in adolescents

To date, more than 3000 students have been seen in high schools across Ontario

Learning Disabilities Research Program, The Hospital for Sick Children

PHAST PACES is the research version of Empower™ Reading High School

Empower™ Reading: High School
An intervention for struggling readers in high school

70 Lessons
(75 minutes/lesson)

Decoding & Spelling
(35 Minutes)

Text Knowledge
(20 Minutes)

Comprehension Strategy Instruction
(20 Minutes)

Empower™ Reading: High School

Text Knowledge

- Focuses on understanding the structure of narrative, expository and other text through exposure to different types of text.
- Students learn to recognize specific text features and signaling devices that authors use, and learn how to use these signals to increase their understanding of text content.

The text knowledge skills serve as a springboard to the comprehension strategies

Comprehension Strategies

- Introduces 5 text comprehension strategies: Predicting, Activating Prior Knowledge, Clarifying, Evaluating through Questioning, Summarizing (PACES).
- A metacognitive PACES Plan prompts the students to use all the strategies, and guides and supports students through the application of each comprehension strategy with specific dialogue or scripts.
- Self-monitoring and evaluative skills are integrated throughout comprehension strategy training.

Performance for 268 PHAST PACES and 83 Control Participants

(WRMT-R Word Attack and Passage Comprehension standard scores)

Model-derived means for two subtests (Word Attack (WA), Passage Comprehension (PC)) of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests across the intervention period for Control and Intervention Participants

Empower™ Reading: Comprehension & Vocabulary

Primary Level (Gr. 2-5)

- Actively use comprehension strategies
- Make connections to what they know
- Explore word meanings
- Identify important ideas or events in a text
- Stop and clarify when confused
- Monitor and evaluate their comprehension
- Read for information and/or enjoyment
Components of Effective PD

- Workshops or seminars
- Outside experts
- Subject-specific content or teaching practices
- Sustained and intensive
- Job-embedded assistance

Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, et al., 2007

Empower™ Reading Programs

Professional Development Model for Empower Teachers

1. Training Workshops
2. Onsite mentor visits
3. Email communications
4. Internal web-based chat room established by school board (not all boards)
5. Web-based technology and video-conferencing for remote sites
Training Workshops
Empower™ Reading Programs

- Four full-day training workshops are provided. *Attendance is mandatory.*
- Workshop Days 1 & 2 (offered before teaching begins) includes:
  - current research on LDs and evidence-based literacy training
  - an overview of Empower™ Reading Programs.
  - interactive training of initial strategies, content, and skills using modeling, with opportunities for practice and feedback.
- Workshop Days 3 & 4 (offered during the school year) includes:
  - Interactive training of remaining strategies, content, and skills.
- Annual half day refresher training workshop. *Attendance is mandatory.*
- All workshops are conducted by experienced Empower™ Reading Trainers.

Empower™ Reading Coaching Visits

- Coaches visit teachers at their schools 3-5 times during the first implementation of the program.
- During each visit, the coach:
  - Models all or part of a lesson with the students.
  - Observes teacher deliver the program to students.
  - Provides feedback regarding program delivery, pacing, and teacher-student interaction.
  - Addresses teacher concerns and questions.
  - Reviews previously taught content and skills, and highlights upcoming content and skills.
  - Monitors how students are progressing in program.
"All students who participate in Empower™ demonstrate improvements in their reading skills, are able to transfer the strategies they learn to their classroom or home readings, and some do not need remedial services the following year."

-John Mackle, Director of Education, PVNCCDSB

"Among the results achieved with the program are significant improvements in student reading levels...improved student attitudes towards learning, and improved educator attitudes and knowledge in addressing student learning needs..."

-Mark Harper, Superintendent, WRDSB

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Canadian Institutes for Health Research

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Greenwood College School
District School Board of Ontario North East

Toronto District School Board
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The Hospital for Sick Children

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IDENTIFYING AND IMPLEMENTING
EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES SUPPORTED
BY RIGOROUS EVIDENCE:
A USER FRIENDLY GUIDE

U.S. Department of Education
Institute of Educational Sciences
National Center for Education Evaluation
and Regional Assistance

December 2003

http://foundationsforliteracy.clrnet.ca/pdf/ReadWriteKit08.pdf