

## Project Title: Bring Balance Back to Literacy Classroom

I first want to Thank the Ellison Grant Foundation along with Bob Hurlbut for giving my self the funds to implement a project that I have wanted to do for quite some time. My team and I have seen a dramatic change in our classrooms this past school year. These changes did not just happen overnight, nor did they happen just within our literacy block but also throughout our entire day, math, science, and social studies.

I applied initially for the grant because I knew that I needed to increase my knowledge and add to my teaching resources about the Science of Reading and Writing. To teach reading in a very systematic intentional design needs to have many components. Each student in our classroom needs explicit instruction, at different levels and in different modes. By having varied materials, our team has been able to design balanced literacy instruction, getting nearly all students on grade level and excited about their learning abilities.

I purchased four different types of teaching and hands on materials. Project Read, Secret Stories, Haggerty and Phonemic Awareness games. Each of these teaching modalities gave us and our students an opportunity for exploration, excitement and the curiosity for learning. These approaches work for all students' levels of abilities.

Project Read is an AI computerized program that could generate stories, word searches, puzzles for many academic levels, in grammar and concept areas. These stories gave our students many opportunities to feel successful.

Secret Stories are a logical way to explain why letters make their different sounds. If I had to pick out of all our strategies and resources, I would say that my students loved learning and acting out the "secret stories". Every time we come across a word that needs to be sounded out or a "sight" word that doesn't make sense my students literally yell out "That's a secret Story". For the few words that do not fit (only 12 in a first-grade classroom) we named

them “Hamburgerlar” (I bought a McDonald’s Hamburgerlar to sit on my desk) for “taking” those sounds. My students will yell out Hey Hamburgerlar, you took those sounds again. My students also love to grab the magnifying glasses out to “guess” our word of the week. In 32 years of teaching, I have never had students who could yell out spelling words or during writing time be able to phonetically spell words like these kids do. They have competitions to see who can find the “secret stories”.



Another amazing program that my students really look forward to everyday is Haggerty. This program is a daily video that builds basic sounds and blends complicated sounds within words. Again, our students this year love to sing the songs, and try to “beat” the teacher on the video.



My last purchase is a series of manipulative games and boards for phonics. On Fridays we typically do “games”. My students consistently ask for Phonics games over their iPad.



I believe that the combination of videos, games, and intentional instruction has taught myself and my students a systematic way to teach reading, speaking, listening and writing skills. I know that this year’s students have many tools for their toolbelt to continue to learn. Giving them a higher level of engagement.

Thank You Again for this opportunity to Bring Balance Back into Literacy Classroom.

Janelle Phillips

1<sup>st</sup> grade Amon Creek Elementary School