

**A RESEARCH SYNOPSIS:
THE DR. CUPP READERS™ AND TEN MINUTE PHONICS™**

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Over the past three years, educators across Georgia have used the *Dr. Cupp Readers*™ and *Ten Minute Phonics*™ as a core reading program. Whether working with beginning readers in the general K-1 classroom or addressing the special needs of EIP, ESL and special education children, positive user comments are common:

My students excelled because the program provided the explicit instruction and repetition they needed. They were very motivated to read. I have taught for thirteen years and this is the best reading program I have encountered so far. I get results.

The *Dr. Cupp Readers*™ and *Ten Minute Phonics*™ demonstrate consistent student improvement as measured by formal and informal testing instruments. Since January of 2002, the effectiveness of these products have been verified with the addition of more formalized review and proof in practice. Research continues to accumulate as surveys are conducted and scores from standardized tests and assessments commonly used by Georgia educators are evaluated. Classroom observations, in-depth educator interviews and multi-year assessments triangulate with other methods of data collection to provide a complete picture. **In 2002, the state of Georgia officially adopted *Dr. Cupp Readers*™ and *Ten Minute Phonics*™ as a curriculum for beginning (K-1) language arts and EIP classrooms beyond that level.**

Both the *Dr. Cupp Readers*™ and *Ten Minute Phonics*™ are grounded in scientifically based research identified by such sources as the National Reading Panel's Teaching Children to Read, The Handbook of Reading Research (Kamil, et al), Preventing Early Reading Difficulties in Young Children (Snow, et al), Put Reading First (U.S. Department of Education), What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction (Samuels and Farstrup) and the *Reading Research Quarterly*. It also includes elements verified by cognitive and behavioral psychologists and educators.

Concepts integrated into the *Dr. Cupp Readers*™ and *Ten Minute Phonics*™ are endorsed by such literacy advocates as the International Reading Association, the National Center for Family Literacy, the National Council of English Teachers, and the National Institute of Literacy. The *Dr. Cupp Readers*™ and *Ten Minute Phonics*™ represent proven methods for moving students toward mastery of the basic literacy elements needed to competently comprehend text.

The basic premise of the *Dr. Cupp Readers*™ and *Ten Minute Phonics*™ is that all children can be readers. These materials are grounded in the idea that children become successful readers when they have explicit, systematic instruction, paced to encourage mastery of every step. In study after study, the same themes and elements are proven to be successful, positive approaches to literacy development among beginning and struggling readers. Those elements are perhaps best summarized in the National Reading Panel's list of comprehensive reading program components. Below are "learning to read" essentials from the National Reading Panel compared to elements of the *Dr. Cupp Readers*™ and *Ten Minute Phonics*™:

U.S. Dept of Education Key Reform Areas for Classroom	Dr. Cupp ReadersTM/ Ten Minute PhonicsTM Basis
Phonemic awareness →	Phonemic awareness
Phonics →	Phonics
Fluency →	Oral fluency
Vocabulary →	Spelling & vocabulary
Comprehension →	Comprehension
Motivation →	Writing & communication
	Homework & parent interaction
	Assessment & study skills

This year, a group of researchers, including Gregory Camilli from the National Institute for Early Education Research and Rutgers University, re-examined findings of the National Reading Panel (NRP). In addition to echoing the NRP's case for systematic phonics instruction, this study **emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive reading program** that also includes a focus on phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. This broad pattern of components repeatedly appears in mainstream research and confirms the approach of the *Dr. Cupp Readers*TM and *Ten Minute Phonics*TM

Kindergarten teachers interviewed as part of the research survey indicate that, after a short time with the “pre-Dr. Cupp Readers Word House concepts” [teaching letter recognition and alphabetic/phonemic awareness], many students can begin to read at once with Dr. Cupp's first story (only containing four distinct words). One educator noted:

Because the phonics component begins in the first story, children develop the capacity to read right away. They begin to read words in real stories and are rewarded when they practice fluency. The first lesson also starts them off answering questions about the stories, to get them thinking about what they read and comprehending from the start.

Well-designed, controlled comparisons of instructional approaches have consistently supported the following components of effective reading instruction:

- Direct teaching of decoding, comprehension, and literature appreciation
- Phonemic awareness instruction
- Systematic and explicit instruction in the code patterns of written English
- Daily exposure to a variety of texts as well as incentives for children to read independently and with others

- Vocabulary instruction
- Comprehension strategies
- Frequent writing of prose to enable deeper understanding of what is read.

Again, all of these components appear in the *Dr. Cupp Readers*TM and *Ten Minute Phonics*TM. By combining the controlled, sequential introduction to phonics skills and sight words, with exposure to real literature via the Recommended Read Aloud Booklist (*Hop N Pop's Favorite Read Alouds* and *Miss O's Favorite Read Alouds*), a comprehensive, daily introduction and reinforcement occurs. Daily practice in key areas allows students exposure to group and individual practice, both in reading and in writing. Especially in the second series of books (31-60), teachers scaffold students into more complex vocabulary as they discuss the more challenging concepts of the *Dr. Cupp Readers*TM stories.

RESULTS

The **versatility** of the *Dr. Cupp Readers*TM and *Ten Minutes Phonics*TM provides teachers with tools they say are critical to every child becoming a reader.

**On average, since 2000,
86% of users gave it a high overall rating**
53% rated it the highest possible,
33% ranking it at the second highest level

The most recent survey (2002-2003 school year) revealed a continuation of this trend: the majority of teachers (85%) who use Dr. Cupp's materials give them a high overall rating (54% rated it the highest possible, with another 31% rating it at the second highest).

Sight words, oral fluency and phonics remain the strongest components according to survey participants. During the survey and individual interviews conducted as an extension, teachers repeatedly confirm the impact of the *Dr. Cupp Readers*TM and *Ten Minute Phonics*TM on students.

Eighty-four percent of those surveyed specifically identify an improvement in their student's attitude toward reading as a by-product of these instruction tools. A full 32% point to the *Dr. Cupp Readers*TM and *Ten Minute Phonics*TM as the primary reason for a reduction in numbers of students not meeting state and national standards. In addition, thirteen percent identify these products as **key factors in improving student behavior** because of the emphasis on character education and the strong motivational element incorporated into the *Dr. Cupp Readers*TM.

Based on the user surveys, **there seems to be no discernable distinction between the effectiveness of the program in the regular K-1 classroom and its use in situations requiring specific remedial instruction such as early intervention classrooms.** Although students' rates of improvement differ according to their abilities and potential, few students (only 7 out of every 100) fail to move forward in reading skills while exposed to these products. Educators from a

variety of circumstances corroborate this in comments shared during interviews and via students' test scores.

Although the majority of schools participating in this year's research used the *Dr. Cupp Readers*TM and *Ten Minute Phonics*TM for two years or less, **it is worth noting that, among those schools using her materials longer, assessment shows continued student achievement.** Since test vehicles used in individual schools have changed so frequently over the past few years in Georgia, it is impossible to compare statistical results from year to year in a volume sufficient to verify results. However, evaluation of these on an annual basis, along with those using similar assessment tools, continues to show proportional improvement.

The overall picture from a test-score perspective shows good and, in some cases, marked improvement. Not only are average students responding but those at either end of the special needs spectrum (gifted and remedial) respond well to its individualized instruction techniques. A summary of results from over 44 classrooms and over 1,000 students is available upon request.

CLOSING

According to creator Dr. Cindy Cupp, the *Dr. Cupp Readers*TM and *Ten Minute Phonics*TM began in Georgia as an effort to equip teachers with a controlled systematic introduction to proven elements in reading instruction. Her materials are built upon a foundation of classroom experience and research, proven in hundreds of classrooms over the past three years. This versatile curriculum offers a comprehensive, user friendly program with the ability to be easily adapted to a wide range of students.

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Ten Minute Phonics see www.cindycupp.com

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