

Strategies for
Teaching
Educators,
Parents and
Students



Edu-STEPS, Inc.
PO Box 794
Gilbert, AZ 85234-9998

Cell 480.570.3888
Fax 480.699.7470
doran33@aol.com

Dear Reader and Instructor,

You are about to take *steps* to reading success, namely, PHONICS STEPS TO READING SUCCESS!

The letters in the English language are symbols that stand for sounds. Our English language is not a pure English language. It is rich with the influence of many languages such as Latin, Greek, German, French, Old English and Middle English. Many words in the English language cause trouble and do not follow Standard English rules. Most of our problems in our reading and spelling in English are caused by vowels. PHONICS STEPS TO READING SUCCESS begins with the study of vowels. If the student does not know his/her consonants, these letter/sounds must be learned first. The instructor can use a commercially developed product or create homemade consonant letter/sound flash cards, for sample, using a picture of bat /b/, cat /c/, dish /d/, etc. from magazine or clip art.

Over the past several generations, millions of students have been taught to read using ineffective, experimental reading methods. The proponents of these methods thought that they were making it easier for students to learn how to read. There are now, however, large bodies of scientific research showing that although such methods may be somewhat effective in the primary grades, they are ineffective beyond primary grades. Non-phonetic methods often teach students to memorize long lists of words and then to guess at words, substitute words, skip words or pronounce the first few letter sounds and then make up the rest of the word *as long as it makes sense*.

In primary grades, the reading level of materials is strictly controlled and the individual's reading difficulty may not be obvious. Words are simple and there are many opportunities for the reader to rely on picture clues. Therefore, non-phonemic strategies may *appear* to be somewhat effective. However, as the reading matter becomes more difficult, comprehension suffers; test scores are low. **The parent or teacher may assume that the reader is making mistakes. In fact, the reader may simply be using strategies that he/she has been taught to use.** Many times, readers may think that there is something wrong with their own reading capabilities. In some cases, the readers may be erroneously labeled as *dyslexic or learning disabled*.

Some usually capable individuals have difficulty with reading because they guess at a word or substitutes. Some readers have not had systematic, intensive, direct-instruction phonics. PHONICS STEPS are first steps to better reading and comprehension. When teaching older students, you must explain to them that they must not only *learn* to read phonetically, they must *unlearn* ineffective strategies. Beginning foundational steps are necessary no matter what the ability or age of the student. A solid foundation of skills for success will be laid as faulty strategies are replaced. Old strategies of guessing, substitution, etc., may be hard to unlearn. Patience is *essential*.

We want you to be successful, either as an instructor or as a reading student. Therefore, **do not hesitate to contact us** with any questions, concerns, comments or ideas. We want to be of service.

Sincerely,
Pat Doran, M.Ed., Theresa Manríquez, M.Ed.,
and the Edu-Steps' Staff

www.edu-steps.com

Pat Doran, M.Ed. President/CEO Phone: 480-570-3888
Theresa Manríquez, M.Ed. Vice-President/National Director Phone 480-703-3329

Note from Internet Publisher: Donald L. Potter
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Pat Doran is a leader in the field of reading instruction, remedial reading in particular. Her *Phonics Steps to Reading Success* published by Edu-STEPS, Inc., is a fast-paced word attack system for developing and improving reading skills. I am involved in a pilot project to remediate several junior high students with serious reading problems using Pat's program. The letter above was taken from Pat's *Program Support Booklet for Pat Doran's Phonics Steps to Reading Success*. The letter is actually a brilliant essay on **why** kids have problems reading and **what** can be done to help them quickly improve their reading and academic success.

Doran's program focuses on teaching the vowel spellings because this is the area in which older problem readers need help. For the few students who do not know all their consonant sounds, I recommend the first lessons in Florence Akin's 1913 *Word Mastery*. I have retyped this magnificent old phonics program for FREE download from the Education Page of my web site, www.donpotter.net. I have increased the size of the font so the pages fit on an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper, perfect for viewing from an overhead projector. The short vowel/consonant lessons can be reproduced and projected on a screen for ease of teaching. Rudolf Flesch's 1955 best-seller *Why Johnny Can't Read and what you can do about it* also has a good presentation of 17 single letter consonants with the five short vowels.

It is my earnest desire to see Pat Doran's program used in schools across the country to help students who were taught faulty word identification strategies to quickly overcome their faulty former instruction and become good readers, good students, and good citizens.

Donald Potter. don@donpotter.net
Odessa, TX

Here is a VERY IMPORTANT quote from Pat's recent book

The Secret Club:

Why and How We Must Teach Phonics and Essential Literacy Skills to Readers of All Ages.

“The term dyslexia is commonly been used to mean having difficulty using words or language. Such a broad definition allows the diagnosis to broadly apply to hundreds of thousands of students, who, far from being learning disabled, simply have been taught to read using inadequate and ineffective methods. The popular rise of the diagnosis of dyslexia seems to have occurred simultaneously with the abandonment of phonics instruction in favor of whole word, sight-reading, and whole language approaches. Dyslexia is not always a learning disability, but often can be **an instructionally induced and learned disability, correctable and reversible with systematic, direct, and explicit phonics reading instruction.**”