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# ISD Reading Network

by Karen S. Urbschat, Ph.D.

The ISD Reading Network was established in the spring of 1987 via a special request of Interim State Superintendent, Gary D. Hawks. In a communication to each ISD superintendent, Mr. Hawks explored the major changes in reading instruction and the MEAP reading test. The outcome was a request for the identification of one staff person in each ISD to be responsible for networking with other ISD personnel for purposes of sharing information about the new reading research and the new MEAP test in reading.

The members of the ISD Network represent a wide variety of ISD positions and consequently varied reading backgrounds. From staff developers to consultants for gifted and talented to reading consultants to general education consultants, the ISD's range of service is well represented. As a result, individuality and creativity has marked the offering of client services across the state. Examples of these offerings have included the following:

1. Sequential meetings with reading authorities.
2. Reading courses held at local sites with university or CEU credit.
3. Awarding of several Section 98 grants to upgrade the teaching of reading.
4. Intensive summer workshops.
5. Mini reading networks with monthly meetings.

6. Linkages to school improvement and long-range planning. (This list is by no means all inclusive and is only meant as a sample of activities.)

The ISD Reading Network has, for the past three years, served as yet another vehicle for the dissemination of information on the newest reading research and its implication for instruction and assessment. While our previous activities have been many and varied, the future holds limitless possibilities for additional activities. We invite you to become involved in any or all of them and to become a leader yourself in the dissemination of information. Please feel free to contact your local ISD Reading Network representative for further information.

*The ISD Reading Network listing begins on the next page.*

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## Changing Paradigms of a Secondary Reading/English Teacher

(continued from page 30)

students who really worked and advanced at least two or more levels in one year. Many students went from low average in my ninth grade General English to American Literature in the tenth grade. I followed their progress and discovered that they did well. One low-average student graduated with top honors in her senior year. At last I really had found a way to help students to become independent learners.

Many of my students have experienced success like the ones that I have described. As I reflect on and evaluate these past years, I can count many triumphs, but I also have serious concerns. I have found the reading strategies to be effective. Why have I not reached more students? There are many factors that contribute to this dilemma. It takes at least eight months of working with these strategies, one hour a day, for students to use them with ease. Many times students use specific strategies only in the class in which the strategies are taught. There is

no transfer of these strategies to other content areas. If strategies were part of the students' educational experiences within the school environment, I believe that the transfer would be made. Teachers need encouragement and support in implementing new research in their classes. If we want to provide the best instruction possible for our youth, the paradigms of school and society must change. My slow, evolutionary process developed over time with much soul-searching and hard work. I am now ready and confident to accept the challenges that are required to help our young people be thinking, reading, writing, and problem-solving adults in this informational age in the United States.

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