

Florida Center for Reading Research

Read On!

What is Read On!?

Read On! version 1.1 was published in 2005 as the latest revision of the Learning 100 System reading program that was first developed in the 1960s by Educational Development Laboratories (EDL). This supplemental intervention program for high school students and adults who struggle with reading is a computerized program that provides reading instruction using a vocabulary-based approach. The instructional goals of *Read On!* incorporate the following components: vocabulary, language skills, reading fluency and comprehension skills, reading application, and writing. The content of each lesson was selected to include information necessary for successful completion of high school. Topics cover literature, science, social studies, life and survival skills, and personal, social, and occupational adjustments. Students interact with the computer lessons individually and the teacher, paraprofessional, or other designated personnel monitor student progress through the instructional cycles. Recommended use for a high school student is 40-50 minutes, three days a week.

The instructional path of *Read On!* is clearly delineated in the teacher materials and in the use of the program. There are three overarching steps: the screening test, placement tests to determine instructional level, and the cycles of instruction for the 10 reading levels: Foundation to 10.5. The 10 reading levels of *Read On!* are categorized by the following letters: RA, AA, BA, CA, DA, EA, FA, GA, HA, and IA. The reading levels were determined by the EDL Core Vocabulary which contains graded lists of vocabulary words (Taylor, Frackenpohl, White, Nieroroda, Browning, & Birsner, 1989). There are 225 total cycles of instruction in *Read On!* The Foundation/RA level has 15 cycles of instruction (cycles 11-15 are optional) designed to build basic word skills. Levels AA, BA, and CA each contain 30 cycles of instruction and are also considered part of the "learning to read" stage. Levels DA, EA, FA, GA, HA, and IA transition students to the "reading to learn" stage. The focus of these levels, with 20 cycles of instruction each, is to build sight vocabularies, teach high-frequency roots and affixes, and how to use context clues and the dictionary. These levels also focus instruction on comprehension skills, study skills for learning content area material. Upon logging onto the program all students complete the screening test. Depending on their scores, students are then placed into one of three placement tests as a starting point: Foundation/RA, DA or GA. Results from that placement test are then fine-tuned by having students complete another placement test on the next higher or lower reading level. Results from the placement tests move students in the instruction and practice components of *Read On!* at the appropriate reading level. Teachers also have the option of prescribing assessments and lessons if they determine students need more practice in an area or should skip particular lessons.



Levels AA-IA contain a Language Clues module, Writing module, and reading application. The Language Clues module introduces new vocabulary and language skills. Some of the activities encountered in this module include: typing a word flashed on the screen, completing sentences with the correct word from the newly taught words, and word play activities such as synonyms and antonyms. A creative writing activity is provided in each instructional cycle using writing prompts and story starters on a variety of topics to engage all students in the act of writing.

Reading application is an important component of *Read On!* Levels AA-IA utilize 'GO Books' as part of each cycle. These books are paperback, chapter books that incorporate the vocabulary introduced in the Language Clues module and provide practice reading for meaning. Each book is themed and written with the interests of the older learner in mind. At the RA level there are blackline masters instead of 'GO Books' to practice independent reading. Once students reach Levels DA-IA they will encounter a Reading Strategies module. This module uses words from the Language Clues lessons in comprehension developing activities. Students are introduced to a comprehension skill and asked to read a passage to practice using the comprehension skill through activities such as answering questions and filling in the blanks with the correct word. Due to the individualized nature of the program students will progress through the lessons at varying paces. Mastery of a skill is required before the program will introduce a new level to the student.

The majority of teacher and student materials needed to utilize this program are found on the computer upon logging in. Teachers are given a user's manual and CD-ROM to help with implementation of the program and student materials include one 'GO Book' per level. Materials are well-organized and easy to use. It is important to note that *Read On!* requires each computer running the program to be connected to a local server. In addition to the initial screening and placement assessments, *Read On!* has many progress monitoring tools available to help teachers identify the instructional needs of their students. There are approximately 16 different reports one may run to determine which students are mastering material and which are in need of additional support. A full listing of the reports and their purposes may be found at http://steckvaughn.harcourtachieve.com/NR/rdonlyres/97A579D5-0476-4A09-B3A4-F3C35EBA36BB/0/MgmtReportsReadOn_opt.pdf.

How is *Read On!* aligned with Current Research?

Read On! integrates the following instructional components into its program materials: vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing. Typical of a literacy program designed for older readers, phonological awareness is not addressed. Word study is embedded within the context of vocabulary at all levels. Vocabulary words selected for instruction originated from the EDL Core Vocabulary. Because of this focus on vocabulary, the word study portion does not address the orthography of English through instruction in letter patterns (e.g., -igh, the three sounds of 'ea'). Word study that explicitly teaches the patterns of the English orthography is important for older students who struggle with decoding (Curtis, 2004; Deshler, Palinscar, Biancarosa, & Nair, 2007; Roberts, Torgesen, Boardman, & Scammacca, 2008). The Foundation/RA level is designed to address the needs of students with very limited reading ability, yet it does not address phonics instruction. Instead whole word instruction with practice reading and spelling vocabulary words (e.g., you, work, bill) are taught as whole units and words are linked semantically based on a story for the lesson. Morphological instruction occurs via building a sight vocabulary and at the higher levels includes Greek and Latin roots and affixes. At these levels of instruction, syllabication is addressed by having students divide syllables according to affixes and root words.

The Reading Next report (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, p. 4) discusses nine instructional elements that appear to have a scientific basis for improving adolescent literacy skills: direct, explicit comprehension instruction; effective instructional principles embedded in context; motivation and self-directed learning; text-based

collaborative learning; strategic tutoring; diverse texts; intensive writing; a technology component; and ongoing formative assessment of students. *Read On!* addresses these nine elements in the content and design of the program. It includes explicit comprehension instruction embedded in a variety of contexts: science, literature, social studies, and life experiences. Subject matter students encounter is appropriate for the older learner as it is motivating and of high interest. Students move through the program at their own pace which enables them to engage in self-directed learning as recommended by Reading Next. The technology component not only allows for self-pacing, but it also provides multiple opportunities for ongoing formative assessments and teacher monitoring of progress. *Read On!* includes diverse texts both in subject matter and varied reading levels. Students are provided with writing prompts to practice what they have learned in the lessons and improve the quality of their writing when teachers review student writing and provide feedback. The 'GO Books' offer an opportunity for text-based collaboration if two or more students are working on the same reading level. It is left to the teacher to organize and implement this collaboration. Strategic tutoring is the main purpose of *Read On!* Each student has an individualized profile formed from the results of placement assessment and ongoing progress monitoring of program performance.

The purchase of *Read On!* includes a one day, face to face, professional development training on the program software and use. It covers an introduction to the program, the assessments, navigating the program as a student, orientation to the user's manual, and how to effectively use the management system. A CD-ROM is provided for teachers to refer back to when needed and technical support is included for faculty, Monday through Friday 7am-10pm, CST.

Research Support for Read On!

A number of studies have been conducted on Learning 100 System, the previous version of *Read On!* However, because of the revision that led to changing much of the content, all graphics and interface (Harcourt Achieve, 2005a) the efficacy studies for Learning 100 cannot be used to determine efficacy of the *Read On!* version. To view the research findings on the Learning 100 System use the research link in the reference section of this report.

Conclusion

Read On! is a computer-based supplemental intervention for high school and adult learners that utilizes the EDL Core Vocabulary word list as the basis for instruction. Version 1.2 of *Read On!* will be released in 2008. In the future well-designed studies, using random assignment, matched units for assignment and analysis, and equivalent scores on pretests between the experimental and control groups should be useful in determining the efficacy of this program.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths of *Read On!*:

- The higher levels provide focused vocabulary instruction on Greek and Latin roots, affixes and patterns for dividing these words into syllables.
- Passages in the 'Go Books' for student practice are high-interest and cover a range of topics.

Weaknesses of *Read On!*:

- The Foundation/RA level of instruction does not include instruction on letter or syllable patterns to aid poor decoders. Only using sight word instruction may place a burden on student memory for word recognition and spelling.
- Moving through a lesson can be cumbersome as the student is required to click a button or hit the 'enter' key after every response. This increases transition time between the presentation of new tasks.

Which Florida districts have schools that implement *Read On!*?

Broward	754-321-2600
Dade	305-995-1430
Palm Beach	561-434-8200

For More Information

http://steckvaughn.harcourtachieve.com/en-US/readon_home.htm

References

- Biancarosa, G., & Snow, C. E. (2004). *Reading next-A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, D. C.: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Curtis, M. E. (2004). Adolescents who struggle with word identification: Research and practice. In T. L. Jetton & J. A. Dole (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy research and practice* (pp. 119-134). New York: Guilford Press.
- Deshler, D. D., Palincsar, A. S., Biancarosa, G., & Nair, M. (2007). *Informed choices for struggling adolescent readers: A research-based guide to instructional programs and practices*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Harcourt Achieve. (2005a). *Read On! Research compilation report* [web version]. Retrieved on May 22, 2008, from http://steckvaughn.harcourtachieve.com/HA/correlations/pdf/r/ReadOn_Compilation_web.pdf
- Harcourt Achieve. (2005b). *Read On! Scientific research base* [web version]. Retrieved on May 22, 2008, from http://steckvaughn.harcourtachieve.com/HA/correlations/pdf/r/ReadOn_SRB_web.pdf
- Roberts, G., Torgesen, J. K., Boardman, A., & Scammacca, N. (2008). Evidenced-based strategies for reading instruction of older students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 23*, 63-69.
- Taylor, S. E., Frackenpohl, H., White, C. E., Nieroroda, B. W., Browning, C. L., & Birsner, E. P. (1989). *EDL core vocabularies in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies*. Orlando, FL: Steck-Vaughn.

Lead Reviewer: Elissa J. Arndt, M. S. CCC-SLP

Date Posted: June, 2008

Important Note: FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide effective

instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does **not** constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

For more information about FCRR go to: www.fcrr.org