

Joyful

Janet N Mort PhD on an innovative Early Intervention Approach

Following a career as a teacher, school administrator, and superintendent, Janet N. Mort, PhD returned to university to research why so many learners struggle with literacy throughout school. Studying with international experts, she formulated and field-tested a new

Our BC kids have social issues, are emotionally fragile, have undiagnosed medical conditions, and are not able to speak, or have had no experiences with literacy. Without immediate, high quality, strategic interventions, these children typically struggle with the results of these burdens for a lifetime.

The school system works valiantly to get these kids ready for school. Our teachers and staff are stretched to their limits to meet these growing needs.

What can we do to change the trajectory for these children? Research shows that an early intervention strategy is working.

Experts like Dr. Richard Allington and Dr. Clyde Hertzman have provided research that demonstrates that at least 90% of kindergarten children are not ready for school. They propose that the remaining 10% may have medically diagnosed conditions that interfere with learning. The NELP (2009) report

literacy as soon as they enter school. Allington and Hertzman are clear that whatever the early childhood experiences, these children are ready to succeed in school.

1. Alphabet Knowledge;
2. Phonological Awareness;
3. High Frequency Words (RAN);
4. Shared Reading and Shared Writing;
5. Family Involvement;
6. Fluency Development.

It is imperative that we begin to address their skill gaps in school immediately.

Research to Action

I returned to university in a PhD program in Literacy and Early Learning to understand why so many children struggle with literacy and overall school success no matter how hard we try to make it. Research shows that 8% of children are not ready for school leading to the development of a new intervention strategy for early learners.

We needed a school district partner with enthusiastic school administrators.

It was essential to have a school district partner to move from research to practice. Leslie Lambie (Peace River South, Superintendent), responded with more than 60 volunteer teachers to begin Joyful Literacy Intervention implementation in 2014. All

position. It unequivocally states that no matter what experiences children have lived through in their pre-school years, they are capable of success in

school administrators committed to implementing and leading the project. In a nutshell, how did we
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Working intensely with classroom teachers, VFKRRO OHdGHUV DQG GLVWULFW of four capacity-building sessions each year, we FUHDWHG DQ DFwLRQ UHVHDUFK F their own Professional Learning Community experiences each month to further support their learning. Principals played a pivotal role attending each event and leading school implementation teams. An assessment and tracking tool (The Circle & KDUwV ZDV LPSOHPHQWHG DW WK strategy was designed and implemented to close gaps for small groups of children who had similar skill needs. Skill gaps closed quickly in this highly motivating games-based structure. Research into practice was achieving success!

At each step of the process we kept close track of data. In all cases, vulnerable children exceeded expectations.

How does the project affect Student Services/ Special Education?

The Blitz strategy targets Tier 2 children, catching them before they fall further behind and providing LQWHUYHQwLRQ LQ FURVV JUDGH J and play-based way. Challenges faced by Tier 2 children are addressed through the Blitz, leaving Special Education services to focus on those who face more complex challenges.

What successes are we having with Indigenous Schools?

The Lauwelnew Tribal School in Saanich implemented the Joyful Literacy Interventions project three years ago. After

