

BOOK REVIEW

Title: Teach your child to read with movement, fun & games – A games-in-a-book reading programme

Author

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Details of the book

Name of Publisher: Printed in S.A by Megadigital
Published in the U.K by Xlibris Corporation
Paperback/Softcover (159 pages);
Also available as an eBook
Published in 2012

ISBN number: S.A version (Softcover 978-0-620-55259-2)
U.K version (Softcover 978-1-4797-0248-0)
eBook (1-4797-0249-8)
(ISBN 13: 978-1-4797-0249-7)

Price in S.A Rand: R280.00

The Review

i) The aim of the book is to help to give parents and non-professionals direction and support to help their children learn to read. The book evolved over 20+ years of working with children with learning difficulties and seeing how the movement being used for gross motor and sensory processes was having a positive impact on the children's ability to focus attention and even to make the visual-auditory links between written letters and their phonemes.

ii) The introduction explains and defines concepts/phrases in a concise and user-friendly manner, which is good for parents reading the book. There are explanations of 'bilateral integration', 'vestibular processing'; 'memory' and 'being alert for reading'.

This is followed by Games and Activities (the bulk of the book which is divided into Playing with the sounds in words; Rhyme and Syllables; Playing to learn the alphabet; Playing with letters of words; Early Reading Games).

The last section consists of Rhymes and Worksheets e.g. Nursery rhymes and Flash word game; sight words)

The activities are presented in a very logical and "developmentally" appropriate way (in terms of reading, and spelling development). There is lovely grading of various activity ideas.

Movement is incorporated into learning in a way that could be replicated in a home or schooling environment (i.e. more expensive equipment not necessary to execute activities.)

Lovely ideas to build up a child's phonetic awareness and how various letters making up a word, fit together.

Colours are used for grading the activities. Good use of colours in the last section (the templates) in order to make the child aware of different sounds making up the word.

The activities are quite fun and appropriate for Foundation phase, and at the same time, incorporate literacy skills – children will "buy in" to these activities.

It is a relatively easy book to navigate and is quite user-friendly. It is not too simple and teachers and even therapists can get good ideas of games to use to enhance reading skills. The activities could also be presented in groups or in the classroom or in therapy. Each game starts with information about how the game can be used to stimulate for example memory, followed by the headings: "Where to play"; "Equipment"; "Layout"; "How to play"; and "Tasks". The rhymes used are traditional English nursery rhymes, but the games are suitable for all children having to learn to read and spell in English. Although stated that the book was written primarily for Grade R and Grade 1, the activities were tried out on older children, and worked quite successfully and were not too childish for Grade 3 and even Grade 4 children with learning difficulties.

It seems a shame to cut out the worksheets from the back of the book because they make up 100 pages of the book, but the binding of the book when folding the book open as though to scan the pages, seemed to loosen and it looked as though the pages would soon come away from the spine. I felt that the graphics could be better and not quite so immature . . . but perhaps this is the trade off needed to keep the book's price quite low. The fonts used in the worksheets and letter sheets are not all the same and it would perhaps have been better to use a font where the "t" has a curl at the base and doesn't end in a straight line e.g "t" vs "†".

Reviewer:

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