

Annual Report:

2009 Summer Tutoring Program



HINDMAN

SETTLEMENT SCHOOL



Hindman Settlement School operates several programs for children with dyslexic characteristics and provides training and support to parents and teachers of children who learn differently. These programs include a Summer Tutoring Program, an After-School Program (which operates in multiple counties) and a new Reading Lab Partnership with Knott County public schools. Using teaching methods proven to benefit students with dyslexia or dyslexic characteristics, the Settlement School has helped thousands of students learn to read since the program began 30 years ago.

Hindman Settlement School believes all children have a right to public education, including those who learn differently. For 19 years the Settlement School operated a full-time school, serving children with dyslexic characteristics. The school was operated under a unique partnership between Hindman Settlement School, public schools and the Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC). It served about 30 students per year.

Although the multi-sensory teaching approach used at the Settlement's James Still Learning Center has proven highly effective at improving the reading scores of children enrolled in our program, getting students' home school districts to approve their participation in the full-time school has been a challenge.

New Reading Lab Partnership

Research shows that early identification, coupled with comprehensive early reading interventions, can reduce the percentage of children reading below the basic level in fourth grade from the current national average of 38 percent to less than 6 percent.

Since the launch of the Settlement School's Early Childhood Initiative, we have focused attention on reaching children before they begin to fail in school. In December of



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2008, the superintendent of Knott County public schools approached Hindman Settlement School about forming a partnership to teach reading to struggling students in Knott County elementary schools, using methods honed at the James Still Learning Center.

This fall Hindman Settlement School and Knott County schools launched a unique pilot program to improve reading scores in three Knott County elementary schools: Beaver, Carr Creek and Hindman. Hindman Settlement School teachers, along with staff from the Knott County school system, have established reading labs in each of these schools to provide specialized assistance to students in grades K-3 who demonstrate early signs of learning differences. This instruction is in addition to the students' regular classroom instruction.



Individual needs and learning styles determine each student's schedule and placement in a reading lab. Placement and schedule decisions in turn determine the intensity and duration of the program for each student. Most students who are assigned to the reading lab will receive a full year of instruction. Some students may need prolonged support both in their elementary schools and through after-school and summer tutoring programs offered by Hindman Settlement School.

While it was a difficult decision to discontinue the Settlement School's full-time school, the new partnership provides the Settlement with an opportunity to do what it does best—teach children to read—and reach between 100-150 students. The partnership follows the Settlement School's historic tradition of providing education extension services to Knott County schools.

Hindman Settlement School chose to enter this partnership because it expects the impact of this work will be far greater than it could achieve through the full-time school. Already the Reading Lab Partnership is serving 138 students, or 108 more than the full-time school. The Partnership also increases the number of professionals who are able to recognize and address reading difficulties at the early stages of educational development.

Knott County schools and Hindman Settlement School are providing funding for the pilot program. The goal is to expand to other elementary schools as resources become available. If successful, the program could become a model for other school districts.

28th Annual Summer Tutoring Program

With the Reading Lab Partnership changes already underway, this summer Hindman Settlement School hosted its 28th annual Summer Tutoring Program for children with dyslexic characteristics. This year the program ran for five weeks, instead of six, because Knott County public schools let out later than usual. The “summer school” program is an intensive summer immersion experience for children who have reading problems and is the only one of its kind in Central Appalachia. Because the program takes place in the summer, children who live too far away to commute can stay on campus and fully participate in a community of unique kids who learn differently.

Overcoming Dyslexia

Dyslexia is an increasingly recognized condition affecting anywhere from 15 to 20 percent of the population. It is characterized by difficulty in learning to read, write and spell, despite conventional instruction and adequate intelligence. The federal government has included dyslexia in Public Law 94-142 (the Education of All Handicapped Children Act) as a specific learning “disability.” Although the Settlement School does not refer to dyslexia as a disability, it recognizes that it can become a disability if students do not receive the appropriate educational services.

While students enrolled in the Settlement’s Summer Tutoring Program are of average or above-average intelligence, their performance in the traditional classroom setting often does not reflect their potential. Dyslexic students who do not receive specialized assistance often lag behind and eventually join the ranks of school dropouts. In reality, these children are “forced out” because the school cannot accommodate their needs.

Because each student with dyslexia is unique, each shows a different combination and severity of problems. The Summer Tutoring Program strives to support and strengthen the innate talent and ability of each individual student. At the same time, teachers provide instruction, which enhances the growth and development of the basic skills that students need to thrive in a traditional educational setting.

The Settlement School uses the Orton-Gillingham teaching method, a proven method that employs a multi-sensory approach to teaching language. Multi-sensory learning techniques require the simultaneous use of four learning senses: visual, auditory, tactile (touch) and kinesthetic (muscle movement).

Public school teachers refer many of the students who enroll in the Summer Tutoring Program. Parents also learn about the program through word-of-mouth or from specialists. All students are evaluated before being accepted into one of Hindman Settlement School’s dyslexia programs to ensure they will benefit from what the program offers. However, the Settlement School does not “diagnose” dyslexia.



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Students Served

Forty-eight students completed the five-week Summer school this year. Eleven of the 48 students came from Knott County public schools. Teachers in all the elementary schools in Knott County are asked to identify students who struggle with reading. These students are evaluated for eligibility for the Summer Tutoring Program.

Boarding Program

The boarding program consisted of 14 students (7 boys and 7 girls). All of the boarding students lived on campus and were served three meals a day in the Settlement School's dining room. The boys ranged in age from 8 to 15 and the girls from 8 to 14.

Kentucky Counties..... Students

Boyd.....	2
Floyd	5
Johnson.....	1
Knott.....	11
Laurel.....	2
Letcher.....	2
Perry.....	9
Pike.....	7
Pulaski.....	1
<i>Subtotal.....</i>	<i>40</i>

Other Counties..... Students

Beaufort, SC	1
Gwinnett, GA	1
Madison, AL.....	1
Newman, GA	1
Polk, FL	2
Thomas, GA	1
Wayne, MI	1
<i>Subtotal.....</i>	<i>8</i>
Total	48



Two dorm counselors worked with the male

boarding students. During the day, one organized evening games and activities, and the other worked as a tutor. There were also two counselors hired to work with the female boarding students. During the day, one worked as a tutor and the other assisted the boys' dorm counselor in organizing evening games and activities. The boarding students participated in a variety of activities during evenings, including going to the Knott County Sportsplex, swimming, movies, cultural programs, nature hikes, softball and various other games.

Daily Schedule

The Summer Tutoring Program runs weekdays from 8-4 p.m. Boarding students also participate in evening activities. Students spend the weekends with their families. Here is the schedule for a typical day.

8:00 - 8:50	Staff Meeting		
8:50 - 9:00	Assembly & Pledge		
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
9:00 - 9:55	Reading	Math	Auditory
10:00 - 10:55	Auditory	Reading	Math
11:00 - 11:55	Math	Auditory	Reading
12:00 - 12:35	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:40 - 1:10	Social Values	Social Values	Math Lab
1:10 - 1:50	Reading	Math	Computers
1:55 - 2:35	Computers	Reading	Math
2:40 - 3:20	Math	Computers	Reading
3:25 - 4:00	Reading Comprehension	Reading Comprehension	Reading Comprehension
4:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

Curriculum

In the past, the James Still Learning Center used the De Paul Structured Linguistics (DPSL) materials as the basis for remediation of reading and auditory skills. These materials offered an explicit systematic multi-sensory phonics approach to reading instruction as recommended by the National Reading Panel. The curriculum is adjusted to meet individual student's needs.

Last year we began using new textbooks that are an updated modification of the DPSL method we have used in the past. The Shelton School in Dallas, Texas, which also educates students with dyslexia, donated the new materials, called Sequential English Education (SEE). The Settlement School has permission to reproduce these materials.

Students are divided into three groups based on their ages. Each group works on age-appropriate content, intended to enhance a student's performance in the traditional school setting.

Group 1 completed a unit in the computer lab on "The Life Cycle of Butterflies." We were lucky this year to purchase butterfly cocoons and the students were able to watch them develop into butterflies. Students observed and wrote about the butterflies in their journals and demonstrated their life cycles. We were also able to buy a few plants for a butterfly garden. Students observed plant growth throughout the five weeks. During the last week of summer school, students released the butterflies. During the third week, one of the tutors taught a session on photography and used the student's photos as a launching pad for student writing assignments. Students took photos of campus, the school, trails, landscapes, etc. During the first 10 to 15 minutes of class they used a program called "Type to Learn" to work on their keyboarding skills.



Groups 2 & 3 completed the same unit on "The Life Cycle of Butterflies" as Group 1. In addition to their journal writing, they wrote about research topics of their choosing. They also worked on test preparations, such as open responses, and different methods for answering test questions. This group also worked to create a magazine about the life cycle of a butterfly and the butterfly garden. Keyboarding skills were taught the first part of every class to get them ready for computer use in and out of a classroom setting.

Evaluation

The James Still Learning Center measures student gains in specific reading and math competencies by comparing student skills at both the beginning and end of the Summer Tutoring Program. Testing is of itself a controversial issue. Many experts in the area of testing believe summer school is too short a time to obtain any valid test results. In addition, children with learning differences demonstrate variability in performance on testing. From a professional point of view, the only purpose of testing is to facilitate appropriate placement and to improve the curriculum.

However, in order to measure the success of the program and to provide parents and public school officials with appropriate information, the James Still Learning Center administers

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the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (Revised) and Wide Range Achievement Test at the beginning and end of the summer program.

A portfolio is given to the students and their families on awards day which contains their first and last pages of written work in reading, math and auditory, plus much of their work from the computer lab. This effort is in keeping with the philosophy that evaluation of all children, not just children with learning differences, should include products, not just scores.

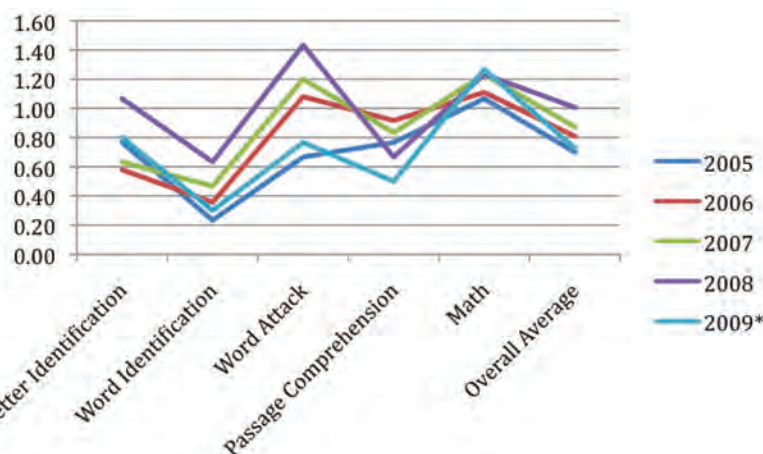
On average, students gained 7/10ths of a grade level in reading and math during the five-week program. Below are results of the average test gains made during the 2009 Summer Tutoring Program for each age group. One student who was working at the college level in math was excluded from the math scores because the test does not score above that level.

Student Gains During Six Weeks (Measured by Grade Level Gains)						
Student Group	Letter Identification	Word Identification	Word Attack	Passage Comprehension	Math	Overall Average
Group 1	0.8	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.6
Group 2	1.0	0.2	0.9	0.6	0.9	0.7
Group 3	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	2.4	0.9
Average Gain	0.8	0.3	0.8	0.5	1.3	0.7

A Look at the Past Five Years

The following chart shows average grade-level gains during the past five years of the program. Overall, there is continuous improvement in program results, with the exception of the shortened program in 2009, which occurred because Knott County schools let out late and the Settlement School could not make the facility available until our full-time school had ended.

Average Grade-Level Gains During Six-Week Program



*In 2009 the program was only five weeks, instead of six.

Identifying children with learning differences, especially before the 3rd grade, is a critical step in helping them succeed. However, research also suggests that in order to overcome learning differences, especially in reading, children need individualized instruction.

An important benefit of the Summer Tutoring Program is that tutors are able to work with students on a one-to-one basis for reading and a three-to-one basis for math, for the entire length of the program. Students are in class seven

hours a day. Because of the highly individualized approach used at the James Still Learning Center, the gains students make in summer school are significantly higher than average gains associated with special education classes.

Student Profiles

Will, Age 7

This year was Will's second year in summer school. During his assessment by the James Still Learning Center, it became evident that he was very distractible and had a hard time remaining still. He would refuse to complete his work and cried for his older sister a lot during classes. Will was very anxious and wanted to give up very easily. He had a huge delay with pen to paper. During summer school Will told us "It's hard for me to remember what I need to put on my paper, I can't do it."

Will became very interested in the type of multisensory approaches to learning we used during reading and math. He would use the sand tray to form his letters and numbers, which he thought was easier and even fun. The structured style of the lessons kept his attention and helped to suppress his hyperactivity. His tutor's constant reminder of "look at me" taught Will the importance of being focused during learning.

Will had participated in some after-school sessions offered by the James Still Learning Center during the school year and had worked with an experienced tutor on phonemic awareness.

Since Will had a hard time with auditory, the summer school tutors would pull him from that session and work on just the phonemic awareness. This was when it clicked for him. Will began to realize that he was able to sound out words that he hadn't been able to read before.

Will was able to adjust to the new learning environment very quickly and made progress in reading and math. His auditory skills improved during this summer. Toward the end of summer school, Will was eager to ask questions and was able to hold his head up high with a smile on his face. That smile was something that we didn't get to see much during the first few weeks.



His gains for the five weeks were:

Letter Identification	1.5 grade levels
Word Identification	0.5 grade levels
Word Attack	1.9 grade levels
Reading Comprehension	0.5 grade levels
Math	0.2 grade levels
Average Gain.....	0.9 grade levels

NOTE: To protect the privacy of our students, we only use their first names and we do not identify them in photos. All photos are for illustration purposes, not identification.

Andrew, Age 15

Andrew first participated in the Summer Tutoring Program three years ago. His evaluation showed a low reading score. When he started summer school it was evident that he was behind in his reading skills.

Andrew is a hard worker, no matter what the obstacle. He is very talkative but was able to complete his work and achieve goals. During math the supervisors and tutors were always trying to find something for him to do because he would finish his work very quickly. By the end of summer school this year, he was working on college-level algebra and trigonometry.



He was able to complete the auditory books this summer with 95 percent accuracy. He worked really hard in getting these completed; constantly asking, "Am I done?" It didn't matter how long the lessons were, he was willing to work extremely hard to finish.

During reading, Andrew was laid back, but was willing to work hard to complete his work. His handwriting was a little weak, but improved as the summer progressed. He was so proud of his work in his "Novel" group because he was one of the strongest readers. He knew at one time that he was the one that didn't have a high enough ability to read those books.

Andrew stated, "I like this because everyone is willing to help me no matter how much I want to talk."

His gains for the five weeks were:

Letter Identification	4.7 grade levels
Word Identification	4.2 grade levels
Word Attack	2.5 grade levels
Reading Comprehension	1.0 grade levels
Math*	N/A
Average Gain.....	3.1 grade levels

**Andrew tested at 12.9 grade levels in math at the start and end of the program. This is the highest level the test measures.*

Avannah, Age 13

This was Avannah's first summer in the Summer Tutoring Program. She came in with the attitude, "I am of age, and I don't need to do this." She quickly came to see that she wasn't the only one with a learning difference. She came in with low confidence and self esteem. Avannah would act out because she knew that the materials were hard for her to understand and to complete. She had an especially hard time during reading tutoring because she was reading on a low level. Avannah remarked, "This is so hard for me to understand what I am reading, because I see it as 'tac' instead of 'cat.'"



Avannah stayed in the dorm and became very close to a lot of the other girls. She always wanted to be the center of attention. After about two weeks in summer school her attitude changed. Everyone noticed a huge difference in her work. Avannah was beginning to see that she could do this if she just took her time. She asked, "Do you have any books I can take to the dorm and read?" She saw that summer school was helping and became willing to work to make it better.

Her gains for the five weeks were:

Letter Identification	0.7 grade levels
Word Identification	1.3 grade levels
Word Attack	0.8 grade levels
Reading Comprehension	1.1 grade levels
Math	3.1 grade levels
Average Gain.....	1.4 grade levels

Preparing Future Teachers

The Summer Tutoring Program not only benefits the students enrolled in the program and their parents, it also benefits the tutors, many of whom are college students majoring in education.

This summer the Settlement School hired a staff of 40 supervisors and tutors, all of whom participated in a three-day orientation and training session before they began working one-on-one with the students. They also received staff training the first hour of every workday.

Program Finances

One of the most unique aspects of the Summer Tutoring Program is that once students meet the educational evaluation criteria, they are accepted into the program, regardless of their parents' ability to pay tuition. During the 2009 session, tuition was \$3,750 for boarding students and \$2,500 for commuting students (the cost was less due to it being a five-week program this year).



Expenses for the Summer Tutoring Program were \$173,286, with an average cost per student of \$3,610. The Settlement School has received \$24,790 in tuition payments and is still owed \$8,010. The remaining \$148,496 was financed through scholarship donations, grants and the Settlement School's general fund.

Without the support of many

individuals, organizations and foundations, the Settlement School would not be able to serve the majority of James Still Learning Center students, who have both educational needs and potential, but are unable to pay for services.



Hindman Settlement School extends special thanks to the following supporters as well as those who provide gifts to our general fund (FY 2008-2009):

- American Woodmark Foundation, Inc.
- Berea College Appalachian Fund
- Karen W. Coup
- Charlene & Dudley Farrell
- First United Methodist Church of Cynthiana
- Georgia Cameo Society DAR*
(Gave in May 2008, but were not listed last year)
- Juanita H. Fasola Foundation, Inc.
- Dr. Samuel H. & Sherilyn K. Hay
- Kentucky River Properties, LLC
- Kentucky Society DAR
- Kinzer Business Realty LTD
- Louisa St. Claire Chapter DAR
- Maryland State Society DAR
- Michigan State Society DAR
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- Texas State Society DAR
- The Oxley Foundation
- James Phelps, Jr.
- Robert C. Thacker/Thacker Family Foundation
- United Way of Southeastern Kentucky



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