

# PSI PARADIGM<sup>®</sup>

A PSI Communique for the Educational Community

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## In THIS Issue

There are experts in every walk of life. Businesses have the freedom to utilize expertise to enhance their products or increase productivity. There is also amazing expertise in every school. However, in the “business of education,” the challenge for administrators or school leaders is the freedom to utilize this expertise when and where it is needed. Often, the expert in math is too busy teaching their own students, the expert in special education might be overwhelmed with duties, or the expert in literacy is uncomfortable with the professional development of staff with whom they work.

As your partner in education, PSI understands this challenge and continues to develop and provide resources for our partner schools. We have gathered expertise in many facets of education from the crucial subject areas of literacy and mathematics to the development of language acquisition with ESL and bilingual services that are increasingly necessary with the changing demographics of today’s students. We have resources for you in school achievement, school safety and special education. In this issue, we are sharing articles from our Expert Partners and Speakers as well as from our management team. PSI is here to aid you in your business of education. For assistance or to provide any further information, please contact our Coordinator of Professional Development, Karen McKelvey at [karenmckelvey@psi-solutions.org](mailto:karenmckelvey@psi-solutions.org).

# Expertise Matters!

## Improving Reading Is Easier Than You Think!

Timothy Rasinski & Belinda Zimmerman, Kent State University

Despite our best efforts, we still have students who struggle in reading. Approximately 33% of our 4th grade students read at a level considered “below basic.” Clearly, we need new ways to think about delivering effective reading instruction for struggling readers.

Reading is highly correlated with academic success. Poetry is often overlooked as one engaging way to boost literacy in the struggling reader. The brevity, predictable and rhythmical structure, and rhyme embedded in most poetry allows even struggling readers to learn to read an entire poem easily and in a relatively short period of time. The confidence that comes from mastering a text and performing it for an audience can help develop in students the sense of self-efficacy that is also associated with proficient reading.

And although we recognize that many teachers continue to use poetry regularly in their classrooms, we see less and

less time devoted to poetry as the instructional emphasis shifts in the elementary grades to narrative and informational texts. Perhaps it is time to revisit poetry – especially with struggling readers.

### Working with Struggling Second and Third Graders

One way to utilize poetry as a supplemental intervention during the academic year and the summer break is to provide additional exposure to poetry. This use of poetry was explored as a main text for providing supplemental summer intervention for 10 second and 15 third grade students previously experiencing significant difficulty in achieving proficient levels of reading. Groups of two to four students worked with one teacher during a 90-minute instructional block. The primary goal of the instructional block is for each child to learn to fluently read a new poem each day. Developing literacy through

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# PSI's Crisis Team Receives Up-to-Date Training

Many schools utilize PSI's Crisis Intervention Team in times of distress. As part of the complimentary services to our client schools, PSI provides this additional support to assist schools in coping with the wide variety of crises they may face. In coordination with school staff and administration, our team is trained to work with students, teachers, families and staff in these difficult times. Some examples of potential crises would be the death of a teacher or student from illness, accidents, suicide or violence.

PSI's Crisis Intervention Team has recently received certified training in both the NOVA and Sanford models of Crisis Intervention. The training was by Scott Poland, EdD, founding member of the National Emergency Assistance Team as well as Co-Director of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office at Nova Southeastern University. PSI also has certified trainers available for Crisis Team development at partner schools if you would like to have your own staff trained.

Along with the expertise that is provided by this training, PSI can provide you resources to assist in the event of any crisis you may encounter such as the death of a staff member or student. These

resources include but are not limited to such items as:

- PSI's Traumatic Event Management Checklist
- PSI's Rapid Assessment Guide
- Potential Intervention Needs Worksheet
- Sample student announcement guide
- Classroom Presentation guide
- Referral Behaviors check-list
- Sample letter to parents
- Student re-entry plan

The team's Administrative Coordinator, Karen McKelvey, EdS, and the team's Clinical Coordinator, Marsha Michaels, LPCC, can be reached by calling the PSI office during business hours at 800-841-4774, x. 230 or 237 or via email at [karenmckelvey@psi-solutions.org](mailto:karenmckelvey@psi-solutions.org). PSI staff assigned to your school can also send a message through their supervisors. As soon as feasible after that point, a team member will contact your school to arrange for possible assistance.

We are in hope that you are never in need of such services but we are available to support you and your professional staff in dealing with a crisis. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you should have any questions regarding this service.

# PSI Represented at the Annual TESOL Conference

Sharon Hamad

Recently chosen to present workshops at the **Ohio Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Annual Conference** were Kay Almy and Sharon Hamad, PSI ESL staff. ESL professionals throughout Ohio attend this annual conference. The two presented well-received workshops entitled **ESL Best Practices (Only The Best For Our ELLS)** and **ESL/Core Teacher Collaboration – Working Together To Service ELLs in the Regular Classroom**. The need for the content for both of these workshops has evolved from requests by PSI partner schools that utilize PSI ESL services.

The PSI ESL service area is continually expanding, responding to the changing demographics in our schools and assisting them in complying with Limited English Proficiency requirements under No Child Left Behind. Our programs implement ESL Best Practices so that students exit from the OTELA program as quickly as possible. PSI ESL services that are available include trained ESL staff, both specialists and aides, to meet the needs of each school. In addition to working directly with ESL students, there is on-going reporting and communications with the classroom teacher and administration to ensure collaboration of efforts, particularly in regard to lesson-planning and student achievement. As needed, PSI provides staff workshops to review ESL Basics, ESL Myths and Musts, and provide classroom teachers with techniques to assist their ESL students in the mainstream classroom. PSI will formally and informally assess the English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of each Limited English Proficient student throughout the school year, and to provide teachers and administrators information about each student's specific strengths and weaknesses.

*PHOTO AT LEFT: Kay Almy (L) and Sharon Hamad (R) at the annual TESOL conference.*



## PSI now offers BILINGUAL SERVICES

AT RIGHT:  
Veronica Szabo works with her students at Hope Academy West



PSI is now offering bilingual services to those students who are truly non-English speaking. While the typical student in schools has some knowledge of English, these students have little to none. There should be academic support services beyond inclusion in PSI's English Language Learner (ELL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. One of PSI's bilingual teachers, Veronica Szabo, was asked for a description of her general approach to provide partner schools an overview of this newest PSI area of expertise:

*"The children I teach do not speak English, they speak only Spanish. By profession, I am a licensed Spanish teacher but am bilingual in English. At the beginning of our sessions, I work with each student by translating curriculum so the students can understand what is being taught in their classrooms in all academic subjects: Social Studies, Science,*

*Math, Spelling, and Reading. This provides a "bridge" to learning English so that academic achievement can be mastered. I help students with this tailored or translated curriculum, while at the same time they are learning the curriculum in English. Often times, students will need certain vocabulary translated into Spanish, and I always hear, "Oh!" I see a light bulb go on with each student I work with every day. In this position, I have the opportunity to see the "light bulb" moment all the time. It makes me say to myself; 'This is why I went into education, this is why I love to teach.' These hard working students appreciate their time with me while I provide the "bridge" to English. Bilingual support has helped the students feel less overwhelmed and more focused on their homework, daily assignments, and tests. Last month I had a student that I have been working with since October tell me in English; 'Thank you Mrs. Szabo, I don't know what I would have done without you!'"*

**PSI customizes Special Education Programs to meet the needs of your students.**

Contact PSI for a detailed listing of EXPERT PARTNERS and topics available for presentations.



## Poetry (Continued from page 1)

poetry instruction was built around the **Fluency Development Lesson (FDL)** (Rasinski, 2010) which is a daily lesson that integrates research-based elements of fluency and word identification instruction into an authentic purpose for reading. Each lesson involves the teacher modeling the poem for students, students reading the poem chorally with the teacher, practicing the poem independently with a partner or two, and then performing the poem for classmates and other audiences.

### Did Poetry Help Students in Reading?

Over the course of our 5-week (19 instructional days) summer reading clinic students learn a poem each day resulting in improved word recognition from 90.2% to 94.6%; fluency improved from 65.8 words correct per minute to 78.4 wcpm. Similar gains were also found in comprehension. Clearly, one small-scale study such as this does not provide conclusive evidence that practicing and performing poetry leads to improved reading. Still, the results are compelling. (For the complete article and further references, please contact Dr. Rasinski: [trasinsk@kent.edu](mailto:trasinsk@kent.edu))

Reference: Rasinski, T. V. (2010). *The Fluent Reader*. New York: Scholastic.

# Academic Success through Organizational Culture

Perry White

Citizens Academy, a charter elementary school in inner city Cleveland, is the only Ohio school to progress from Academic Emergency to Excellent with Distinction. As the school's founder and CEO, I knew we needed the right organizational culture to propel us to excellence.

For an inner city school to achieve an Ohio rating of Excellent with Distinction, the conditions needed to be created to encourage everyone to come to school every day:

- Devoted to the mission
- Energized to go the extra mile for the mission
- Willing to learn new things and do things differently

People can't get too attached to what they currently do and know. Why? Simply put, from the perspective of their students' futures, it's not good enough. What should adults get attached to? I believe we should be attached to our:

- 1) Shared devotion to students and how much they're learning
- 2) Being ambitious and humble in equal measures
- 3) Remaining committed to improving our craft and outcomes

By loosening our attachment to what we currently know and do, we begin to create conditions for creative problem solving, an environment that puts what's best for students above all else.

## Two major gaps in most schools

At Citizens Academy we learned a school has to fill two fundamental gaps as quickly as possible:

- 1) Gap #1 – Is between knowing what children know and need to learn by a certain time
- 2) Gap #2 – Is between knowing what adults know and need to learn to enable students to achieve at levels commensurate with school goals

Every ounce of energy should be focused on bridging these two gaps. Essentially, this is how an inner city school can achieve a rating of Excellent with Distinction.

## Improving Math Scores - Academic Achievement and Beyond

Barb Duda

### To Whom Does Expertise Matter?

In today's world, with project managers, directors, coaches, advisors, and councils, it appears that everyone is looking for an expert to help them succeed. Experts are utilized to help us all capitalize on talents, skills, knowledge and expertise to acclimate to our ever-changing world and to thrive as a functional, profitable contributor to society's betterment.

### PSI Employs Experts

PSI staff includes experts in many areas—psychology, special education, health services, and speech therapy among other disciplines. Eleven Expert Speakers are available for presentations on timely topics in the areas of health and education.

### Schools Also Employ Experts

PSI's **Academic Math Coaches** are responsible for providing guidance in the implementation of the Common Core Academic and Math Practice Standards, to keep faculty aware of research-based strategies for mathematics instruction and to help teachers use them effectively. Our math coaches observe lessons and hold a post-observation interview with teachers to critique the lesson and to

suggest alterations for future use of that lesson. That discussion is followed by collaboration on what the teacher should do next—expand the lesson, re-teach the lesson, or assess the students to identify and make plans to fill learning gaps. Collaboration is the key to identifying student needs and learning styles; and then, to design lessons to meet those needs. While the immediate goal is to achieve student academic success, an ultimate goal might be to produce experts in the field of teaching mathematics so that our students become experts who can compete with world leaders through innovation, application and precision in mathematics. When this occurs, the training and provision of experts will have gone full circle.

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PSI provides a wide variety of school health, special education, ESL, foreign language and intervention services.

Contact us for more information.



**EXPERTISE Matters!**



Partners for Success and Innovation



Barbara Miller  
Squires Sanders (US) LLP

## Providing Special Education: Are You on Top of your Game? By Martin Siegel

At PSI's annual fall meeting, Bobbe Miller spoke about the need for educators to comply with special education laws. Ms. Miller, a retired teacher and administrator, is an educational consultant with the legal group Squires Sanders (US) LLP. Throughout her well-received presentation, she spoke using twin viewpoints: legal and educational. Although the law is the law, in the end it is how it is interpreted that counts.

There are two federal laws governing education: IDEIA and NCLB (No Child Left Behind). The underlying principle for both is that all children receive a free and appropriate education and that students demonstrate *measured educational progress*. The latter is the gold standard of whether teachers are doing a good job.

Interestingly, states have varying interpretation of federal law governing special education. Each state must submit its educational "plan" to the appropriate federal agency for approval. Regardless, the principle is to develop an individualized program designed around each child's specific needs. Challenging to begin with, the process can be complicated when a parent signs consent for some things but not all.

There is the question about what constitutes an evaluation. The only sure way to proceed, Ms. Miller suggests, is to complete multi-factored evaluations with a team consisting of the regular teacher, special education teacher, psychologist, speech or language teacher, administrator and parent. The purpose of the evaluation is

to determine if a child is eligible for special education and related services under IDEA in one of the 13 disability categories. That determination must be made within 60 days of parental consent. Currently, re-evaluations must take place every three years in all necessary areas to determine continued eligibility.

The IEP is about what the specially designed instruction will "look like." The goals on the IEP will tie directly to the educational needs identified in the multi-factored evaluation. The goals must relate to the disability. A helpful rubric to use when developing a goal is: who, will do what, to what level, under what conditions, in what length of time,

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## Providing Special Education: Are You on Top of your Game?

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and how progress will be measured. Periodic progress reports are required for students on IEPs and must indicate in measurable terms the amount of progress made on each goal since the previous report. These progress reports need dates and quantifiable data instead of using vague descriptions such as “sometimes” and “frequently.” If a student has demonstrated no progress, the team must reconvene to discuss what else can be tried/how should the goals be modified/etc and to amend the IEP if necessary. By the same token, if that student has met the initial goals, the team should also reconvene regarding additional goals.

If a parent comes to a school and says, “I want a test because I think something is wrong with my child,” the district has 30 days to determine if it suspects a disability. During that 30 day timeframe, the district

may gather RTI data, reports in the student’s file, and any other relevant information to assist in making that determination. If the district suspects, then parent consent is obtained and a multi-factored evaluation occurs. Once underway (and at any other time a child is being served by an IEP), a parent may bring a report they had completed for their child, *any report*, to the evaluation team and its contents must be considered. This does not mean that every/any recommendation must be implemented, but it must be acknowledged/considered by the team.

“Cherry-picking” for evaluations can also be a complication. A parent may want to mandate who conducts the evaluation, where it takes place and the tools that will be used. Although every attempt

should be made for agreement, the parent has the option of consenting or not to consent to the evaluation. If parental consent is not obtained for the evaluation, the district may either file due process against the parent or send the parent a prior written notice and the child is then treated as a regular student.

Finally, in this digital age any email may be considered part of the public record. So also are communication journals. Be very careful about what you put in an email because it could come back to haunt you. Finally, remember that the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) structures what information about a student can be shared and when it is appropriate. When in doubt, don’t until you are sure you can. This includes talking about students in the teacher’s lounge!

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