



Reading About Me!

Teaching Reading to Visual Learners

Reading About Me (RAM) is a unique beginning reading program specifically designed to hold the interest of visual learners and has successfully been used to teach reading to learners of all abilities, ages 3 to 55.

Website: www.readingaboutme.org

Contact: Deb Evans – 541-601-4748, deb@dsaso.org
Ron Schaaf – 541-601-7929, debron3@gmail.com
Joyce Rogers – 541-326-5436, joyce@dsaso.org

Features that make RAM unique:

- Fully customizable and personalized to each learner
- Can be used/taught by anyone
- Report System for Educators
- Collaboration—home & school
- Foundation for building reading Success
- For any age and ability
- Effective for struggling and non-readers
- Follows the lead of the learner
- Principles are key to closing achievement gaps

Appropriate for:

- Preschool (Head Start)
- Kindergarten
- Students on IEPs
- ELL students and adults
- Adults with ID/DD

Developed by:

The Down Syndrome Association of Southern Oregon, a 501©(3) non profit organization.

Underlying Principles:

The RAM approach, originally pioneered by Patricia Oelwein, author of *Teaching Reading to Children with Down Syndrome*, establishes meaningful reciprocal relationships fostering a natural curiosity to learn from shared experiences and knowledge. In addition, the principles of teaching follow James McDonald, CCC-SLP, PhD's ideas of responsive teaching and 50/50 balanced relationships to promote speech, listening, turn taking and learning. Reading About Me uniquely follows the lead of each learner and empowers any person interested in engaging—parents, educators and friends—the ability to partake as an equal partner in the learning process.



Reading About Me!

Teaching Reading to Visual Learners

Letter from preliminary studies conducted in 2011 by Professor Gregg Gassman, PhD, Southern Oregon University to Scott Perry, Superintendent, Southern Oregon ESD.

I have been asked by Deb Evans and Joyce Rogers to give you a summary of the research project I conducted to examine the Reading About Me! (RAM!) Program. Last year, I conducted a pilot research project targeting an elementary site-based setting and a secondary transition setting. In both, I targeted students with developmental disabilities. At the elementary setting I had three students. Two students (second and third grade) were pre-tested at that pre-primer level for vocabulary and below pre-primer for comprehension. The average sentence construction was two words for both students. The third student (third grade) was pre-tested at the primer level in vocabulary, pre-primer for comprehension, sentence construction was an average of three words.

At the secondary level, I had two students (nine and ten). Both students were pre-tested at fourth grade for vocabulary, between second and third for comprehension, with an average sentence construction of five words.

Observations were conducted over a seven-month period. Data from the observations targeted the fidelity of implementing the program, the response patterns by the students (prompted or self-initiated), sentence construction (number of words, with/without pic-syms, relationship, and generation source [student or teacher]), and comprehension. I also collected data on the word bank mastered by the students.

Preliminary analysis of the data indicate that when RAM! was implemented as designed, students gained .7 to 1.2 grades in vocabulary, comprehension gained .4 to .9, sentence construction was an average of 7 words. The observational data indicated over the period of seven months students made steady increases in self-generating sentences, reduced the number of prompts required to response to stimuli, and were able to construct sentences creating coherent and complete paragraphs. In one case, a complete story was self-generated by the student.

Anecdotally, I found students using RAM! gained confidence in their skills, became more social, and increased time on task and active engagement.

Bear in mind these are preliminary, using single subject methodologies. The next phase will be with comparator subjects using a matched paired design to determine statistical significance between RAM! students and those using another reading approach.

As a teacher educator and researcher, I am impressed with RAM! given the outcomes I have seen so far, the ease of use, and the relevance of the curriculum to the lives of students with developmental disabilities. I have several of my preservice teachers using RAM! in their field placements with success.

If you would like to meet to further discuss my findings, please let me know.

All the best.

Gregg

Dr. Gregg Gassman, Coordinator
Southern Oregon University
School of Education
Special Education Programs
541.552.6095
gassmang@sou.edu

33 N. Central Ave. Suite #205, Medford, OR 97501
info@readingaboutme.org • 541-326-5436 • www.readingaboutme.org

The following letter was read to the Medford School Board fall 2013 upon the announcement that Superintendent Phil Long would be resigning and a search for a new superintendent was getting under way. Nick's experience is emblematic of both an inequality that students who are culturally different face and the sometimes blind eye that education has toward valuing and embracing difference. Asking students for solutions, and listening when they speak, is imperative to the change needed to close any achievement gaps. The solutions we propose in engaging parents and community to embrace and be an active voice and mentor for children throughout their education will succeed as we learn to believe in and value ALL kids for the contributions and leadership they provide—to each other and to the process of learning.

Good evening school board members and the Medford Community;

My name is Nick Morales. I am a 2012 graduate of South Medford High School and have attended schools in this district since I started kindergarten at Jackson Elementary School. I achieved a 3.97 GPA, I am a Distinguished AP scholar and I am a recipient of the Gates Millennium scholarship. I am currently attending Reed College in Portland and majoring in Biology. Imagine all this from a kid who, I believe, was seen as another Latino kid who would never amount to anything and maybe not even graduate.

My journey through public education was filled with challenges and subtle messages that could have drastically changed my trajectory in life. The fact that I made it to where I am today is mostly due to the involvement of my parents. During elementary school, I was housed in a building that was in desperate need of repair. The food we were served in the cafeteria was not healthy for us. We had to soak it in ketchup before it was soft enough to chew. The building's air quality constantly made me sick with sinus infections. My teachers were great, but the environment was not suitable for learning. Buckets in the hallways to catch water from the leaks, carpets badly worn and stained. The bathrooms were permeated with the smell of urine. What subtle messages were we receiving??

I did a eulogy at a funeral of a friend and an administrator was impressed with my ability to speak in public . One day my teacher called me up to her desk after class and handed me a certificate. Apparently I had been chosen as student of the month for my friend's eulogy. Sorry she said, I spilled coffee all over the last one. I was supposed to give this to you a while ago. End of ceremony. The list goes on...

For me college prep and scholarship information assistance from the school was nonexistent which leads to my final message. The Senior scholarship award presentation. Even though I did not receive any scholarships from South they asked me to attend since I had been granted a Gates Millennium scholarship. At the end of the event a South Administrator came up to me and said, "thanks for making us look good. Really?? Not, "Great job Nick." "You've worked hard Nick." No...

With a 69% graduation rate there are obviously many other kids that heard those same messages I did, and did not have the support to encourage them or make them believe that they could be successful in school. Poverty, race, learning disabilities affect a much larger group of students that we probably realize. Until there is a strong message from the top to say that we will make all kids successful, and that we will adapt curriculum to meet the needs of all our kids, we will continue to see the same dismal statistics that we've seen for the past 25 years. As a product of the Medford school district I believe we need leadership that will have zero tolerance for pre-determined success based on a student's race, income level, or those who need additional supports to be successful and that courses are offered that interest and challenge students, not merely serving as a check off on the list of what to accomplish before a kid is granted a diploma that meets minimum standards.

It troubles me to think that there are a hundred more Nick Morales out there that just need a chance and support to accomplish their goals and I am hopeful that new leadership will help those kids on their way.

Reading About Me!

A unique strength-based approach to teaching reading to beginning and struggling readers

What is Reading About Me?

- Reading About Me! (RAM) is a beginning reading program specifically designed to hold the interests of visual learners and can be used by parents, teachers or anyone interested in teaching individuals of all ages and abilities to read.
- RAM uniquely follows the lead and interests of each learner allowing the creation of fully customizable and culturally relevant teaching materials.
- Through cultivation of reciprocal relationships, learners gain self-confidence and become actively engaged communicating partners for life long learning.

Key Benefits of RAM

- Anyone can teach RAM – parent, teacher, peer, etc.
- Utilizes right brain learning which creates instant success for young beginning learners and older struggling readers alike providing a critical bridge to traditional approaches.
- Requires only that learners be capable of matching two objects to successfully learn to read.
- Promotes reciprocal relationships for mutual learning and enhances all communication skills: listening, reading and observing, speaking, and writing.
- Supports multiple languages (English, non-English, ASL)
- Values kids as teachers and active partners in their own education
- Builds self confidence and a love of reading
- Creates life long learners

Reading About Me Timeline

- 1997** Patricia Advocaat researches best educational practices
- 1998** Patricia Advocaat researches best educational practices
- 1999** Most students entering S.O. schools with no reading skills
- 2000** Launch: 1-to-1 personalized Program with 30 learners, age 3 to 42. Overwinn's guidance
- 2003** Created printed materials for About Me! for education, parents and private reading
- 2007** Partnered with scholars to develop Project A to develop a-student reading software
- 2010** Reading About Me! software launched
- 2013** Began teaching over 300,000 in private schools. Funds to convert RAM to an online, fully accessible program.

It is paradoxical that many teachers and parents still differentiate learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them.
Leo Buscaglia

Two Educational Approaches

Reading About Me Relationship Based

Traditional Education Content Based

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.

The Oregon Achievement Gap

Source: Oregon Department of Education

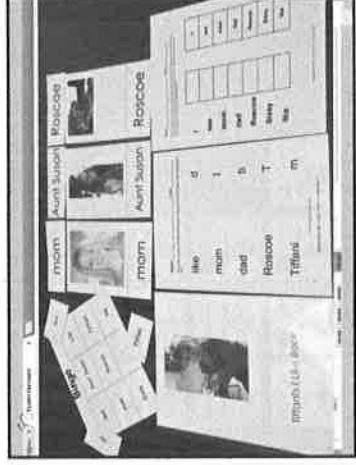
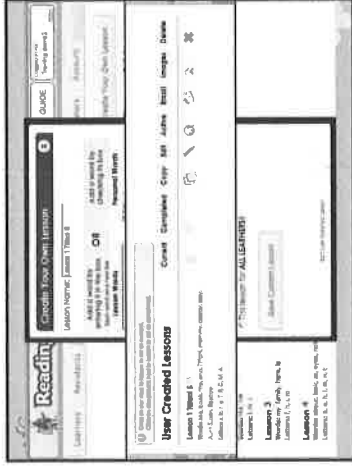
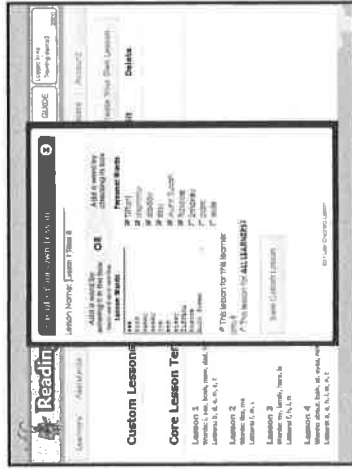
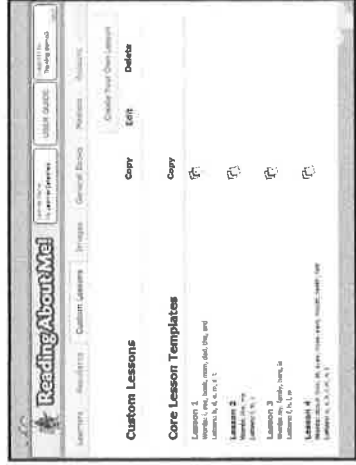
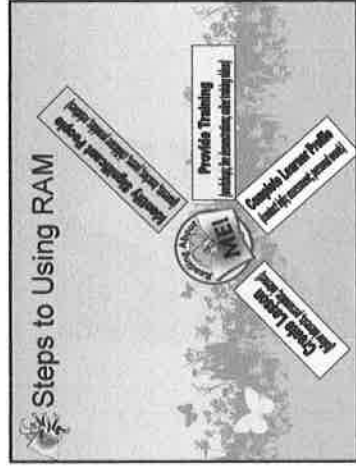
Who does RAM target?

- Early Childhood Learners ages 3-6
- English Language Learners
- Culturally Diverse Learners (ELL, at risk, IEP, etc.)
- Any learner, regardless of age or ability, who has struggled with the traditional methods of reading.

How RAM can make a difference for Oregon children

Early Childhood Learning:

- Success by matching
- Reciprocating partners – first teachers
- Creating personal RELATIONSHIPS
- Pride & confidence building for learning and mentor Kindergarten readiness
- K-12 the win-win of Tired Peer Mentoring:
- Self Directed Peer to Peer mentoring
- Shared teaching & learning
- Gains for at risk teens/mentors
- Self directed growth
- Valuing all abilities & cultural differences



Level 1 - Letter to Word

Choose the word that begins with the letter shown.

l

like
Tigger
monkey bars

QUIT


Level 2 - Word to Word

book

green
the
dad
Allen
book

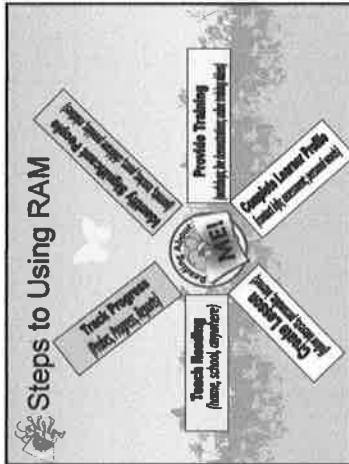
QUIT

Level 3 - Picture to Word

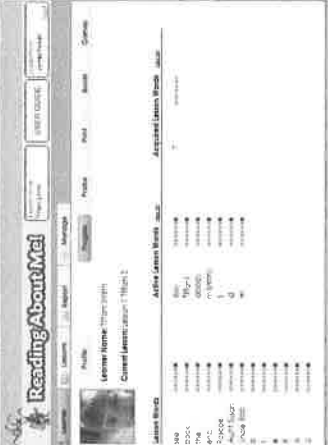


brown
monkey bars
Allen
Aunt Kate
dad
papa
book

QUIT



mommy

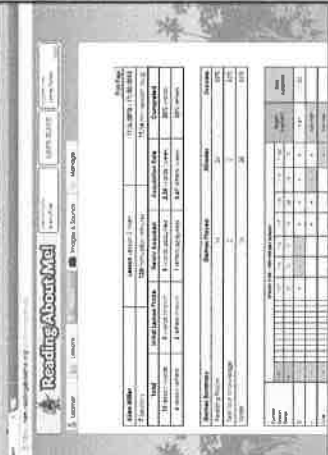


ReadingAboutMe!

Home Home | My Profile | My Reading | My Lists | My Friends | My Reports

Active Learning Words: 100

Word	Read	Know	Know-How	Know-Why
book	100%	100%	100%	100%
like	100%	100%	100%	100%
Tigger	100%	100%	100%	100%
monkey bars	100%	100%	100%	100%

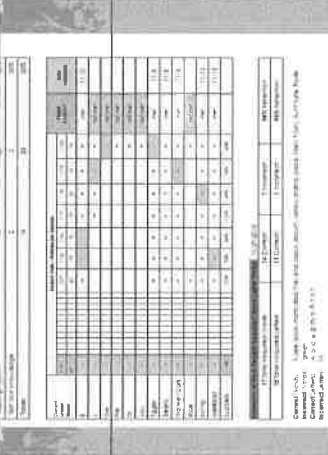


ReadingAboutMe!

Home Home | My Profile | My Reading | My Lists | My Friends | My Reports

Allen's Reading Log

Date	Book Title	Author	Pages	Read	Know	Know-How	Know-Why
10/10/10	Book 1	Author 1	100	100%	100%	100%	100%
10/11/10	Book 2	Author 2	100	100%	100%	100%	100%
10/12/10	Book 3	Author 3	100	100%	100%	100%	100%



ReadingAboutMe!

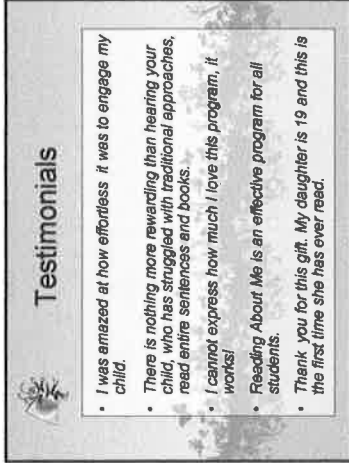
Home Home | My Profile | My Reading | My Lists | My Friends | My Reports

Allen's Reading Log

Date	Book Title	Author	Pages	Read	Know	Know-How	Know-Why
10/10/10	Book 1	Author 1	100	100%	100%	100%	100%
10/11/10	Book 2	Author 2	100	100%	100%	100%	100%
10/12/10	Book 3	Author 3	100	100%	100%	100%	100%

Testimonials

- I was amazed at how effortless it was to engage my child.
- There is nothing more rewarding than hearing your child, who has struggled with traditional approaches, read entire sentences and books.
- I cannot express how much I love this program, it works!
- Reading About Me is an effective program for all students.
- Thank you for this gift. My daughter is 19 and this is the first time she has ever read.



What People Are Saying

"I was amazed at how effortless it was to engage Ava in the RAM program. The personalized words and photos made the experience fun, comfortable, and interesting! I am so proud of my girl and cannot stress enough how much I love this program, it WORKS! By the third time we used her photo and word strips she could read every one and was ready for more! Ava is excited to read for anyone who will listen!"

~ KALA MULVEY, Parent

"RAM centers on the personal and visual aspect of teaching that works so well for children experiencing Autism. Just as social stories and visual cues help my daughter to understand different situations and expectations, RAM has utilized those same principles in teaching my daughter how to read. There is nothing more rewarding than hearing your child, who has struggled with traditional approaches, read entire sentences and books!"

~ KELLY DEMPSEY

Kindergarten, Teacher & Parent

"Reading About Me! is an effective program for all students. Tapping into student interests motivates them in acquiring critical basic skills, while promoting more complex skills. Reading About Me! is part of our pre-service training program's reading methods course. I recommend it as a stand alone or as an addition to other reading programs."

~ DR. GREGG GASSMAN

Coordinator Southern Oregon
University Special Education Programs

Features at a Glance

- ◆ User friendly: teachers, parents and friends can easily implement the program.
- ◆ Quickly allows addition of personalized words and photos to 15 core lessons and endless numbers of create-your-own lessons.
- ◆ Uses a technique called "Match", "Select" and "Name" to introduce new words and letters.
- ◆ Features printable games and interactive materials for practice.
- ◆ Allows the creation of unlimited fully personalized books.
- ◆ Tracks learning data and generates instant comprehensive progress reports.
- ◆ File-sharing makes access and collaboration at home or school easy.
- ◆ Includes a 12 month subscription with full access for one learner per license.

Try RAM risk-free
for the first
30 days! Go to:
ReadingAboutMe.org

100% MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

Reading About Me!

33 N Central Ave, Suite 205
Medford OR, 97501

info@readingaboutme.org
www.readingaboutme.org

Special
Conference
Offer

Reading About Me!



A Personalized
Approach to
Teaching
Reading to
Visual Learners

A fully customizable
teaching method for
beginning and struggling
readers

Easy-to-use online lessons
for teachers, parents & peers

Adaptable for classroom
or home use

Online at:

ReadingAboutMe.org



A Customizable Online Reading Program for Beginning Readers



What is Reading About Me!

Reading About Me! (RAM) is a beginning reading program specifically designed to hold the interest of visual learners and can be used by parents, teachers or anyone interested, to teach individuals of all ages to read. Success is maximized when the approach is fun and personalized to the interests of the learner. Unlike typical beginning reading programs, RAM focuses on customizing the reading process by allowing the user to tailor lessons with images and text pertinent to each individual learner.

Important Features

Reading About Me! allows the user to upload personal words and photos to any of the 15 core lessons and to create unlimited additional custom lessons. Personalized word cards, picture cards, books and practice materials are readily generated for each corresponding lesson. Data tracking and instant progress reports provide an easy and accurate measurement of reading growth. Add fun games, lots of praise, practice and positive feedback and you have a creative, solid and successful foundation leading to a life full of reading for meaning, function and pleasure.



How it Works

RAM uses a sight word approach and teaches alphabet recognition and sounds using the beginning letter of each word. By systematically teaching words that are meaningful to each learner, RAM uniquely builds on successful implementation of critical steps needed to create a bridge to early reader books and more traditional reading instruction. Parents and teachers have successfully used RAM with typically developing children, English as Second Language learners, as well as children and adults with Down syndrome, those on the autism spectrum and those with other intellectual disabilities.

Reading About Me! is available for single learners and home use or in multiple license options for teachers, school districts and parent associations allowing for quick lesson preparation and easy management of one or more learners.

History of RAM

Reading About Me! was developed by the Down Syndrome Association of Southern Oregon (DSASO) in conjunction with Patricia Oelwein, author of *Teaching Reading to Children with Down Syndrome* and co-author of *Literacy Skill Development for Students with Special Learning Needs: A Strength-Based Approach*. The program's goal: to provide many individuals who have not typically been successful readers in school a chance to show that they can learn to read. The result was Reading About Me!—a print version of personalized lessons and teaching materials which has successfully been used by student teachers, special educators, regular educators, parents and peers in school districts, private schools, households and as part of the education curriculum at Southern Oregon University.

New! Online Version

Spurred by positive feedback from users, DSASO in 2010 began developing the prototype to convert RAM to an online, subscription-based program. Partnering with Project A, co-creators of the award-winning "Art Authority for iPad", the current online version of Reading About Me! was launched in 2013.

