



Data, Tech and Inspiration; a community model for K-12 tutoring

Leah Galione, Executive Director, GNV Bridge Literacy Program

great to be among a great group of people who care about kids

This is the everyone reading conference. Our nation is in huge crises. our poor children cannot read.

I'm leah galione and I'll tell you who I'm not-

I'm not a teacher, expert, administrator.

I'm a mom of 5 and community member who cares.



GNV BRIDGE
LITERACY PROGRAM

TEACHING KIDS TO READ USING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

As experienced educators, we can all agree that kids' academic success shouldn't be based on race or income level, but it is. Over the past three years, The Bridge Literacy program has remediated over 150 students struggling with reading fluency. We created a unique, easily replicable model that engages local community volunteers to coach K-12 students in 15 minute virtual reading lessons five days a week. I believe if we employ this model in afterschool programs, faith communities, juvenile diversion programs, schools, workplaces, and homes it has the potential to help not just hundreds, but thousands of students become literate. So, I have broken the process down into a few simple steps:



1. Problem



2. Plan



3. Action

the problem, the plan, and the action. By the end of this presentation, I hope to inspire you to lead YOUR community in ending the illiteracy crisis.



So, who am I?

No one special - I'm just a regular person who made a career of homeschooling my five kids and teaching group fitness classes. I have always been involved in community service, whether I'm volunteering as an usher in local theaters, organizing social events in my neighborhood, or hosting parties for my Aqua aerobics ladies.

My longest commitment to my community has been at my church, the Vineyard of Gainesville, where I have been a member for more than 30 years and also where I received the inspiration for this literacy program. About 5 years ago, we hired a new pastor who encouraged us to engage in more social justice issues. One of those actions was relocating our church building to a historically Black, low-income neighborhood with failing schools. The leadership paid attention and listened to our neighbors whose children were long-deprived of educational equity. Naturally, they wanted the same access to opportunities, support, and resources for their children that kids on the west side of town had.



1. Problem

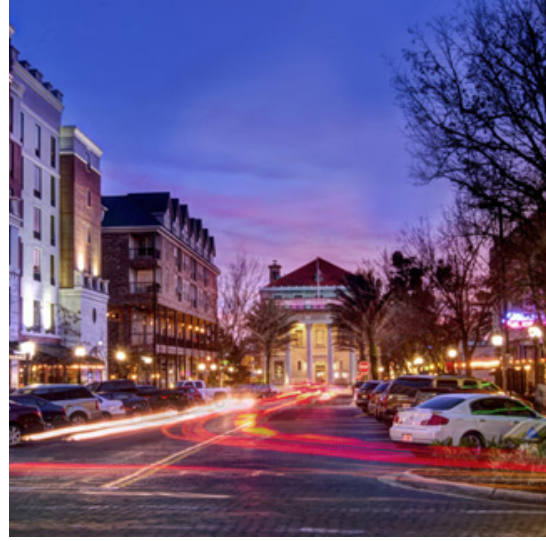


2. Plan



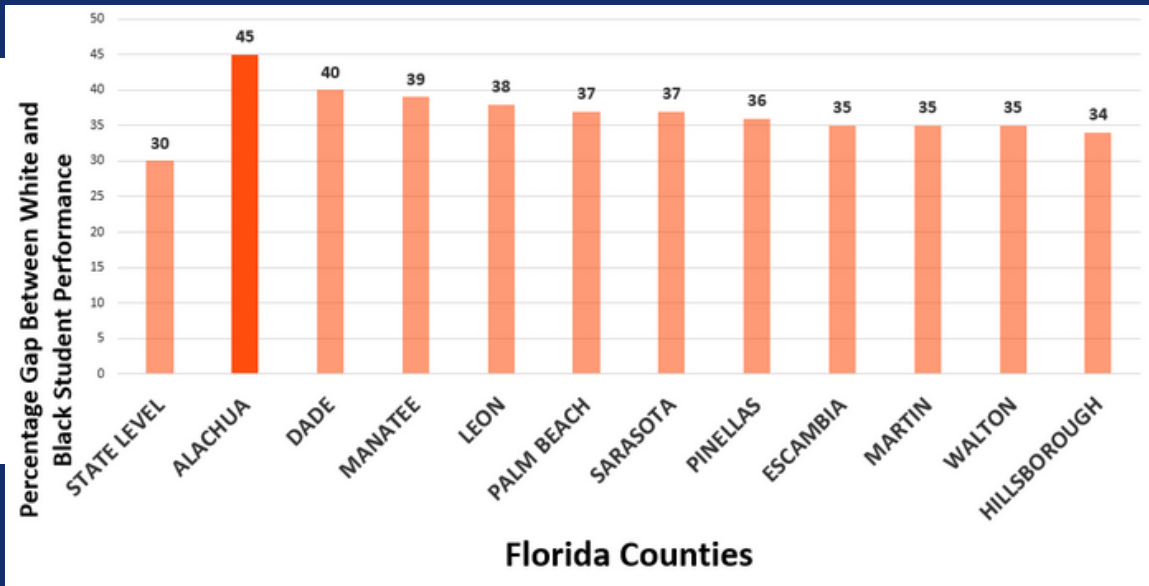
3. Action

The Problem-kids can't read!



Although Alachua County is home to a top 5 public university-Go Gators!- it also has the highest racial achievement gap in the entire state of Florida

Florida Counties with Greatest Racial Achievement Gap



Alachua County has the **highest racial achievement gap** in the State of Florida.

This graph shows the percentage gaps between White and Black student academic performance in both math and ELA. Look at the state gap here- 30 percent!. Out of all 67 counties in the state of Florida, Alachua County has the biggest gap- a whopping 45%! In 2017, our school district came up with a long-term equity plan to close this gap by 3 percent every year. If we settle for that 15-year time frame, we will have lost a whole generation of students. UNACCEPTABLE! TOO LONG!. Plus, they have no feasible plan to do it. They've never been able to do it.



“

**83% OF LOW-INCOME CHILDREN
CAN'T READ PROFICIENTLY BY THE
END OF THE THIRD GRADE.**

ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION



According to the Annie Casey Foundation, 83% of low-income children in the U.S. can't read proficiently by the end of third grade.

So, now you see our problem-our poor kids can't read! I know, we all know that. Everyone knows that. The problem is so overwhelming. What can we do?



1. Problem



2. Plan



3. Action

I'M GLAD YOU ASKED! SO LET'S TRANSITION TO THE PLAN

What does an effective literacy program need?



Plan

- 1 Point person
- 2 Money
- 3 Volunteers
- 4 Students
- 5 Intervention

point person
money
volunteers
Students
intervention

POINT PERSON



LEADERSHIP



HEART



COMMITMENT

A point person. They have to have leadership, heart, and commitment.



Literacy is an effort people can get behind who are from any race, religion, or political party. literacy is a hot topic right now. There are many local, state, and national grants funding efforts like this. Alternatively, you can do Go Fund Me, a Car Wash, whatever. You aren't asking people for money, you are giving them an opportunity to be a part of what you're doing-saving kids lives.



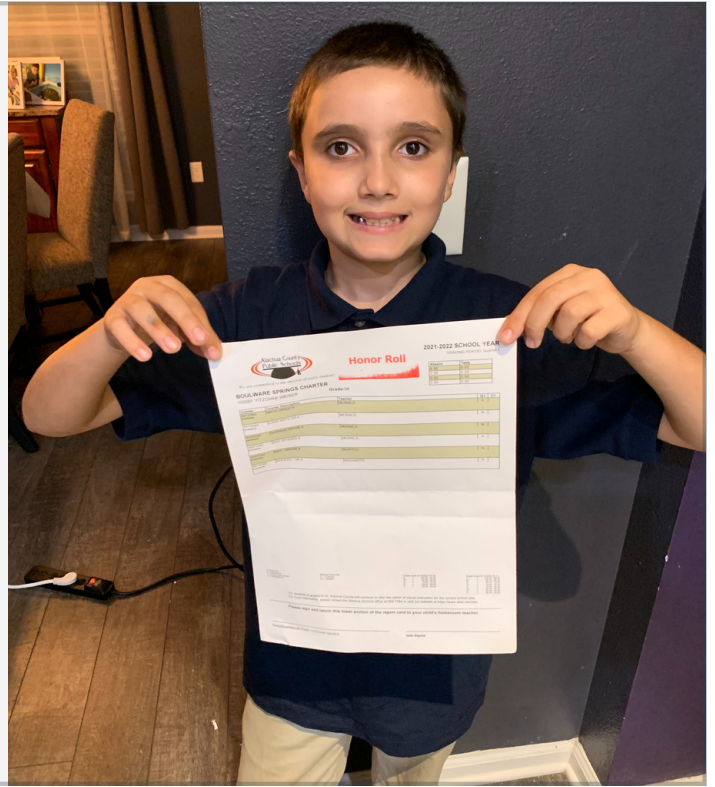
Volunteers: People want to help. It's in our DNA. We want to make our mark. We want to make a difference. People also like to feel needed. We don't need volunteers, they need us. They need us to offer them an opportunity to be a part of something outside of themselves. Where do you feel it when you feel like you really met a need for someone—helped them in some way? I'm serious. Where do you feel it? I feel it across my chest. It's like a warm feeling in my heart. Which of us can't use more of that? But we must respect our volunteers by offering experiences that give maximum impact with minimal time, energy, and resources.

How do I find them? Make a list of people you know. Near where I live, the army is 70,000 college students. But there are others who can do the same: retired teachers, faith based organizations, professional organizations, high schoolers, middle schoolers, afterschool programs, etc.

What are the qualifications? Simple—if you like kids and you can read, you can help. You don't have to be a general. We have an army of generals. We don't need generals. WE NEED WARRIORS!!! It does not take a literacy expert to teach a majority of our struggling readers to become independent readers. The work to end illiteracy cannot be done ONLY by literacy interventionists and here's why: For one, it's too expensive. They are worth their experience and should be paid well for what they do but the families I work with can't afford \$160/hr. They can't afford \$10/hr. Two, there aren't enough of them in the world to do it. The need is too great. And three, it will take too long. Anything we can do outside of the work of literacy interventionists is helpful so they can work with the kids who have learning disabilities and not bog down the system

with kids who lack opportunity.

STUDENTS



Students:-where are your open doors? Principals, doctors, afterschool directors, neighborhoods, social media groups, libraries, PTA's, teachers, reading interventionists.... When the schools wouldn't let me in, I stood at the crosswalks and asked parents if their kids needed reading help

Here is Yosef. Yosef is a student with autism who's parent reached out to us in desperation.

Over 10 months of working with him, he went from a 1.5 grade level reading to a 4.9 grade level with a 51% increase in reading rate

He also made the honor roll

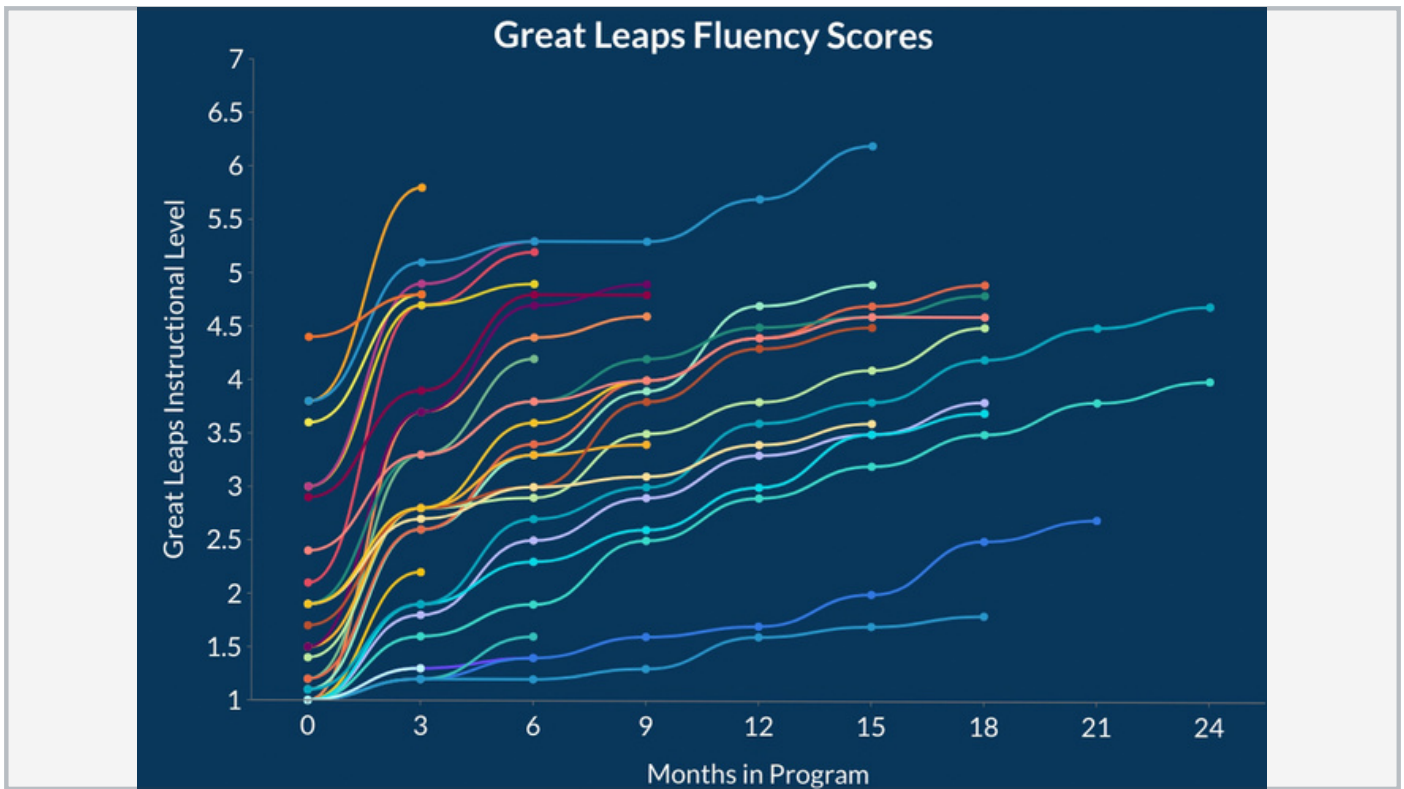
INTERVENTION

- 1 Data-Driven
- 2 Have zero prep work
- 3 Be easy to implement
- 4 Fun




You need to have an intervention with the following components

It has to be data-driven, zero prep work, be easy to administer, and of course, fun



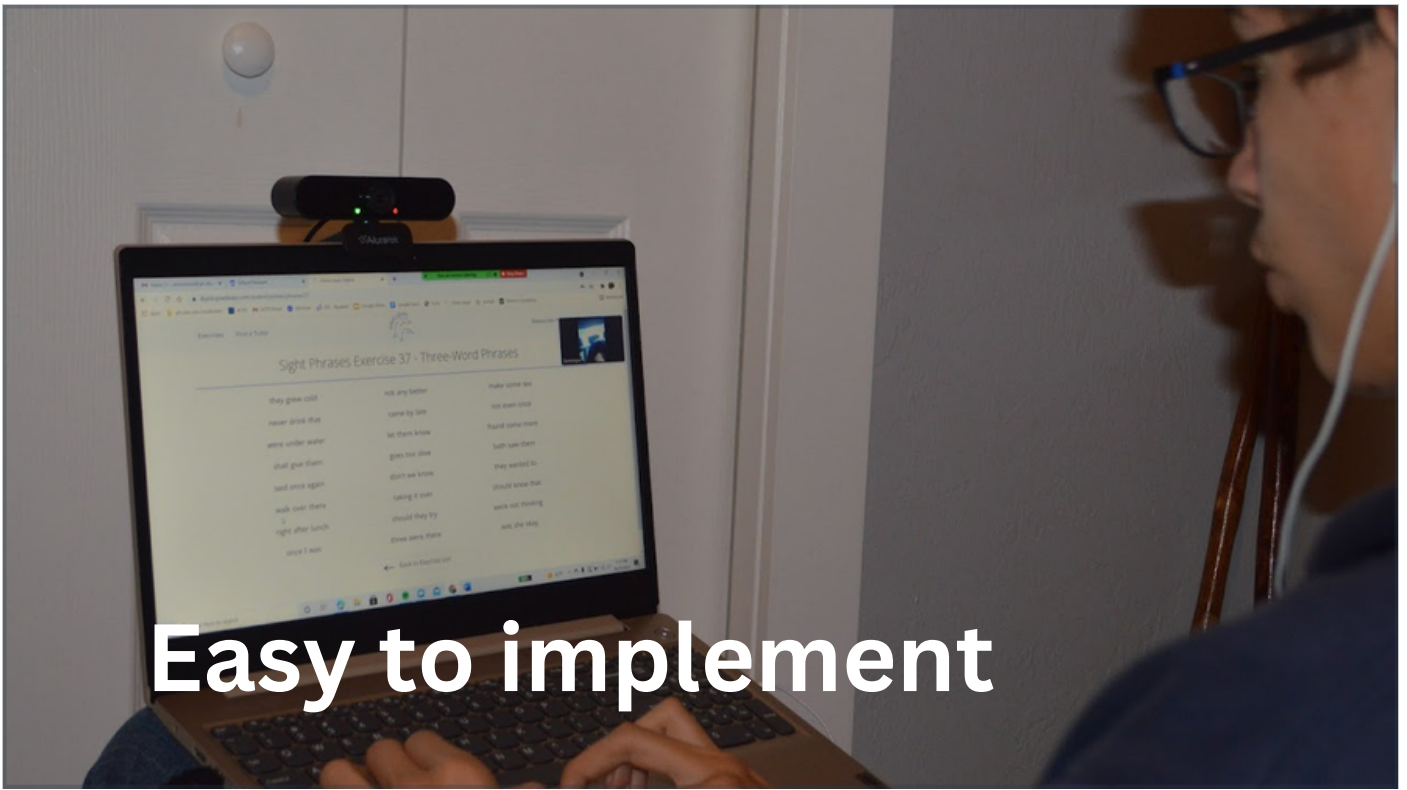
Data-Driven-While for-profit organizations use data to generate profits, nonprofit organizations use data to drive change in society and better support the communities they serve. In order to get grant funding opportunities, I had to get good data. My program had to work-and not just for our rich and middle class kids.

You can see here, we keep our kids in the program until they reach their independent reading level. It's unethical to just start to teach a kid to read and then you stick with them until they can read.



Have zero prep work

Have zero prep work- Let me share my experience of volunteering in kids church and maybe you'll understand. I really like kids. I have 5 of my own. I thought that by volunteering, I would show up, play with some kids, feed them a snack, sing some songs, share a story, and bye-bye. Um, no. Here's what actually happened: I would get the lesson emailed to me 3 days before (if I'm lucky). There is a packet of materials with crafts, stories, games, and such. I would have to read the lesson, round up the supplies, and then figure out how to modify it-b/c people that actually work with kids don't actually write these little boxed sets. On the day of, I would have to get there early, set up the room, and then of course that great little plan I was handed deteriorated from there. So I would have to modify,...modify again...modify again. Wait for the clock to strike 12 for parents to come pick them up and go home exhausted and frustrated my desire to help went all wrong, not to mention that what started out as an invitation to "come, play with our kids for an hour and sow seeds into these sweet little souls turned into a 3 ½ hour nightmare. The intervention you use shouldn't require preparation. A good intervention has already done the hard work for you.



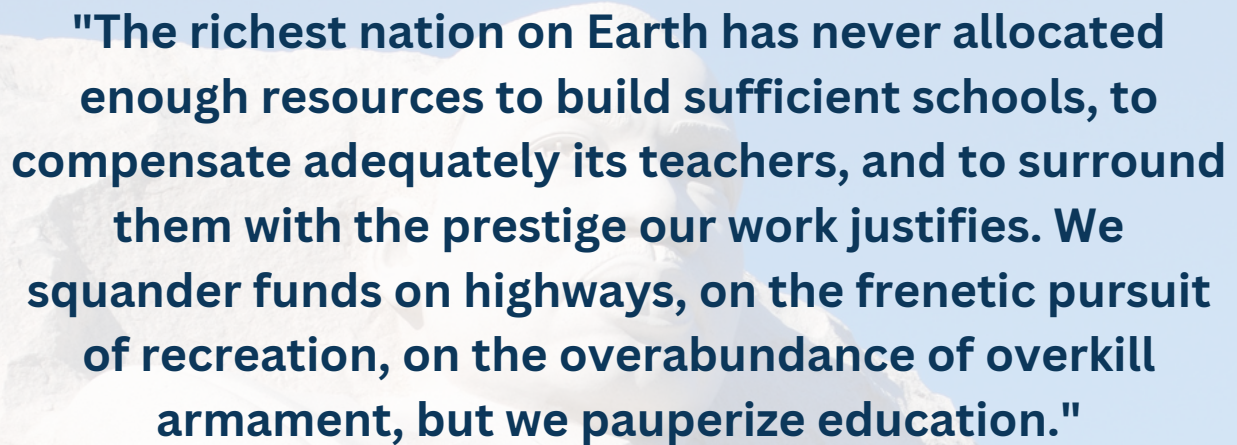
Easy to implement

Be easy to administer, now let's apply this to your experience in classrooms or schools- how many of you have old curriculums, materials, books, etc. sitting in a closet or bookshelf unused or barely used? Right. Ok, audience-why? They were shiny and new, looked good, etc but either weren't practical in implementation, you weren't trained in how to use it, or they just flat out didn't work. Why do so many interventions go to the wayside? Districts and schools spend a mountain of money on materials, training, etc. but it doesn't change life for the marginalized students.



Lastly, and in my opinion, most importantly, the intervention needs to be Fun! Why? Well, the only thing worse than bad data is no data. At least with bad data, you have an idea of what didn't work. If kids won't participate, you get a big fat ZERO for your data. So, when working with kids, especially at risk kiddos, we have to have an intervention that kids enjoy. We can't do boring interventions with at-risk kids. If we bore them, or insult them by offering them "baby stories" to read, that's our fault, not theirs. What our experience shows is that the kids in our program actually look forward to their daily reading lessons.

***an intervention isn't going to be fun if you start a child at their instructional level. These kids have experienced reading failure from an early age. Their self confidence is poor, and they're anxious. They need to gain confidence and score some wins. I mean, have you ever whined about scoring 100% on a test? For this reason, the placement testing for a child's starting point is very important.



"The richest nation on Earth has never allocated enough resources to build sufficient schools, to compensate adequately its teachers, and to surround them with the prestige our work justifies. We squander funds on highways, on the frenetic pursuit of recreation, on the overabundance of overkill armament, but we pauperize education."

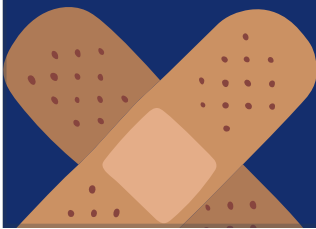
-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Almost 60 years ago, in March, 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The richest nation on Earth has never allocated enough resources to build sufficient schools, to compensate adequately its teachers, and to surround them with the prestige our work justifies. We squander funds on highways, on the frenetic pursuit of recreation, on the overabundance of overkill armament, but we pauperize education."

Why should we continue to wait another 60 years to do something? We all know the definition of insanity - doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results. We don't have time for red tape and talking about what we are going to do. We need to do it. We are in a crisis. You don't send marshmallows to Ukraine. It is time for a revolution. The schools and the government have already proven they can't move the needle. We all know that! If the system won't do it, the people must! And that means us, all of us! Me, included.

band-aid solution:

a temporary solution that does not deal with the cause of a problem



Cambridge Dictionary

Why is our program so important? Why is it different from other attempts? Unfortunately, the non-profit attempts aren't much help to the schools either. Most of what I see are band aid efforts - a temporary solution that does not deal with the cause of a problem

Here are some band aid efforts my county does that get me fired-up. bringing retired teachers into schools to read books with kids, The city of Gainesville gave \$22,000 to a loads of learning project. This placed books and reading tools for kids to access when parents brought their kids to the laundromats. Have you ever visited one of those? Not many kids I know are floating around. The well-funded Dolly Parton Imagination Library that sends new books to low-income students' doesn't hurt anything. But it also doesn't help children learn to read. Reading isn't caught, it's taught.

These things sound great on paper but they don't facilitate self-sufficiency. Afterschool homework help? Useless for a child who cannot read. Those kids are coming back tomorrow with more homework. These are bandaids. Frankly, I'm ready to give the antidote. Why don't we teach them how to read so they can do their own homework?

**"If you give a man a fish, you
feed him for a day. If you teach a
man to fish, you feed him for a
lifetime."**

Fish is nice. I like fish. But you don't keep on giving people fish to assuage their hunger, You teach them how to fish!. We have to give them hand ups, instead of hand outs.

**IF WE AREN'T IMPACTING CHANGE THEN WE HAVE TO
CHANGE WHAT WE ARE DOING.**



So, IF WE AREN'T IMPACTING CHANGE THEN WE HAVE TO CHANGE WHAT WE ARE DOING.

Dr. Louisa Moats

This we know: reading failure can be prevented in all but a small percentage of children with serious learning disorders. Historically we know only 15% of kids with low reading scores actually have a learning disorder. It is possible to teach this other 85% how to read if we start early and follow the significant body of research showing which practices are most effective. Students living in poverty, students of color, and students who are eligible for remedial services can become competent readers—at any age. Persistent “gaps” between more advantaged and less advantaged students can be narrowed and even closed. Fundamentally, these gaps are the result of differences in students’ opportunities to learn—not their learning abilities.

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She also says teaching reading is rocket science. Lots of things are rocket science until someone figures out a way to simplify it. Take automotive engineers designing vehicle transmissions—one of the most important components of a vehicle. The torque converter connects the engine to the transmission and uses pressurized fluid to transfer power to the gears. This apparatus replaces a manual friction clutch and lets the vehicle come to a complete stop without stalling. What if in order to drive a car you had to understand all of the ins and outs of a transmission? But those “rocket scientists” figured out a way to make it all work together so all I need to do is move a lever into Reverse, Drive, or Neutral.

What the science of reading has taught us about teaching the truly dyslexic has been immensely powerful in working with children who cannot read because of curriculum casualties.

It does not take reading experts to teach children WITHOUT serious learning disorders to become independent readers.

So, we need to give our students these opportunities with effective interventions. Let me show you how:



1. Problem



2. Plan



3. Action

ACTION

(this is how our program works and how you might set up the same thing)

GREAT LEAPS

The Great Leaps reading program is designed to **quickly** and **easily** help struggling readers catch up.

15 minutes a day x 5 days a week = at least 2 years growth in the first 6 months

We the Great Leaps reading program because is designed to quickly and easily help struggling readers catch up. As a bonus, it was locally founded(Micanopy) by special needs teacher, Ken Campbell. In 1991, after growing frustrated with the lack of tools provided for him in his classroom, he began to create and test solutions that would effectively help his students improve.

His efforts were successful right from the start. Shortly after, a leading University of Florida Professor, Dr. Cecil Mercer came to Ken's school. During his visit, Dr. Mercer overheard a student ask the principal to move an assembly time "so that it would not interfere with his reading lesson." Of course that got his attention and shortly after Dr. Mercer conducted his own trials using Ken's program, which were a huge success. Great Leaps is now an internationally implemented program used in all fifty states and in over forty countries. It has helped over half a million children learn to read.



WHO GREAT LEAPS IS FOR

Great Leaps has worked to help students with a wide variety of challenges including:

- Dyslexia
- ADHD
- Mild Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Choppy readers
- Robot readers
- English language learners who are conversant in English

It's highly effective for students with dyslexia, ADHD or other common learning disabilities.

Students who struggle with phonics and sounding out words.

Students who lack comprehension after reading materials.

Students who struggle with fluency and have choppy word-by-word reading.

The Four Parts to Great Leaps



1. Phonics



2. Sight Phrases



3. Stories



4. Questions

Our volunteers sign up for a virtual 2 hour training where they obtain their background checks, technology instructions, and training on how to implement the intervention.

There are 4 parts to Great Leaps.

Phonics Exercise 1 - Short a - c, v, c, cvc

m	a	d	mad
s	a	d	sad
b	a	d	bad
D	a	d	Dad
l	a	d	lad
r	a	d	rad
h	a	d	had
f	a	d	fad

Students go through three one-minute timed cold reads. The first one is Phonics.

Our written language is phonics based, so it is essential that students can decode (sound out) words. The Phonics section begins with blending individual letter sounds into words and then systematically works through the basic phonics rules of our language.

Sight Phrases Exercise 1 - Two-Word Phrases

I am	she is	they are	Am I
is she	Are they	he is	Am I
Is it	are they	it is	he is

The second one is phrases.

A student can know every rule in the English language and be able to decode every word there is but still not be reading. There are some words that we must be able to read automatically, smoothly and with ease. Great Leaps works on those sight words, not only to teach them but to eliminate the high error rates many students have concerning these words.

Stories Exercise 6 - Pie

Pie

I ate a peach pie
I didn't use my fork
Now I look
Like a foolish dork

That pie is on my face
And in my hair
Pie is on my clothes
But I do not care

Pie is on my shirt
And all over the floor
After talking to Dad,
I won't do that any more

Lastly, students read a story: The stories have been carefully ordered from simple to difficult. They have been designed to not only teach students how to read but to help them develop a love of reading. There are no pictures and they are not content based stories. They are written in conversational English and are most often the most popular part of the program for our readers.

DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

- **Level 1**

1. What kind of pie was eaten?
2. Describe the character after eating the pie.
3. Why did the author make a mess?
4. Define the word "foolish."

- **Level 2**

5. Describe the events of this story in terms of cause and effect.
6. Why didn't the character use a fork?
7. What would happen if this character ate soup without a spoon?

- **Level 3**

8. What do you think the dad must have said?
9. Why wouldn't he/she care about the mess?
10. Describe the worst mess that you ever made.

- **Level 4**

11. How can you completely clean up the mess without lifting a finger?



TELL ME WHAT READ

ASK QUESTIONS

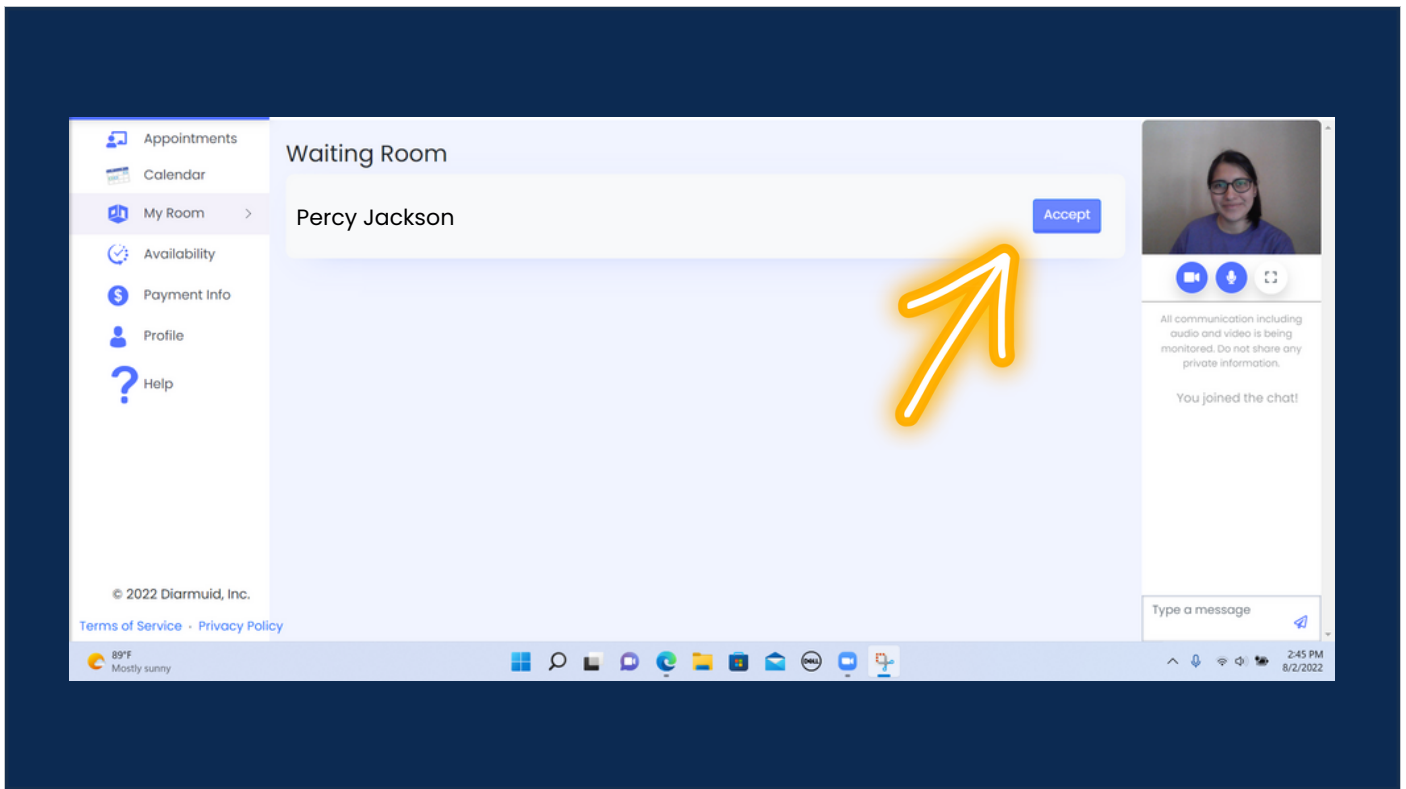
develop critical thinking skills

ELICIT EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

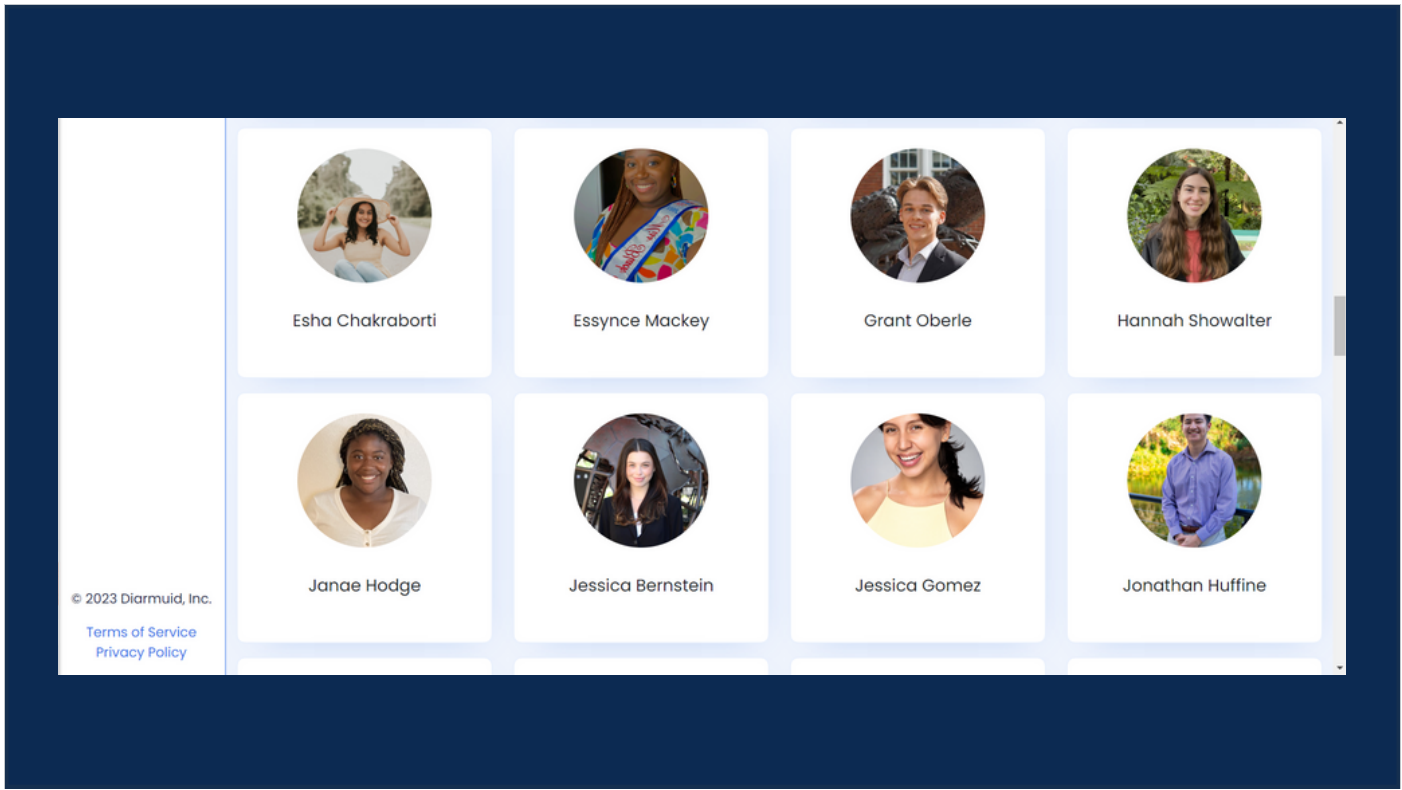
build vocabulary

ENCOURAGE THINKING

If you cannot speak a sentence how can you write one?



In order to meet with their students, the reading coach (tutor) goes to a website and logs in. Then, just like a zoom account, wait for your student to appear in the waiting room.



At the same time, the student goes to a website and clicks on their reading coach’s picture

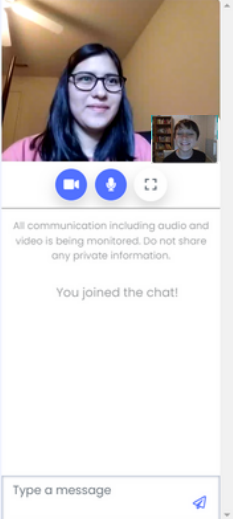
Student View

Please wait for your tutor to join and they will provide their username and the student code.

Teacher Username

Student Code

[Log In](#)



All communication including audio and video is being monitored. Do not share any private information.

You joined the chat!

Type a message

Then, the student logs in and the intervention begins.

PARENT TESTIMONIALS

Heba

"I am writing to express my gratitude for how much of an impact you have made in 2022 in my daughter's grades...she now approaches her math and language arts homework more confidently. All your fun activities and interesting lesson plans have kept her engaged and she looks forward to the class... Thank you for everything you've done. She loves and talks about everything she is learning and doing on her online sessions with you."

Patricia

"...Her teacher said her scores improved exponentially more than any other student she has seen."

Here are some parent testimonials we have received.

Anna's mother, Heba, sent this text message to Anna's reading coach. Anna began on phonics exercise 7 making 4 errors and after 5.5 months is now on exercise 51

Patricia, Sam's mother, mentioned the following in a feedback form. Sam began on stories exercise 43 and ended on story exercise 97.



“

**ALTHOUGH THE SCHOOL WORK IS
THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY,
STUDENTS' READING SUCCESS IS
OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.**

DR. LOUISA MOATS



Dr. Louisa Moats said, “Although the school work is the teacher’s responsibility, students’ reading success is our shared responsibility.”

I hope I have sparked your imagination to involve your community in a joint effort to end the illiteracy crisis.

It opened my eyes to the need and the difference a small amount of time each day can impact a lifetime. It is a very rewarding experience!



I realize how important it is to educate underprivileged youth as it is so easy to overlook basic necessities such as literacy. The youth need our support and educating them through free programs such as GNV Bridge is a great way to help them achieve long term goals.

Through coaching, I have seen that there are numerous reasons why an underprivileged child may fall behind. I have noticed that just being there for them everyday improves their skills because they need the support that it provides.



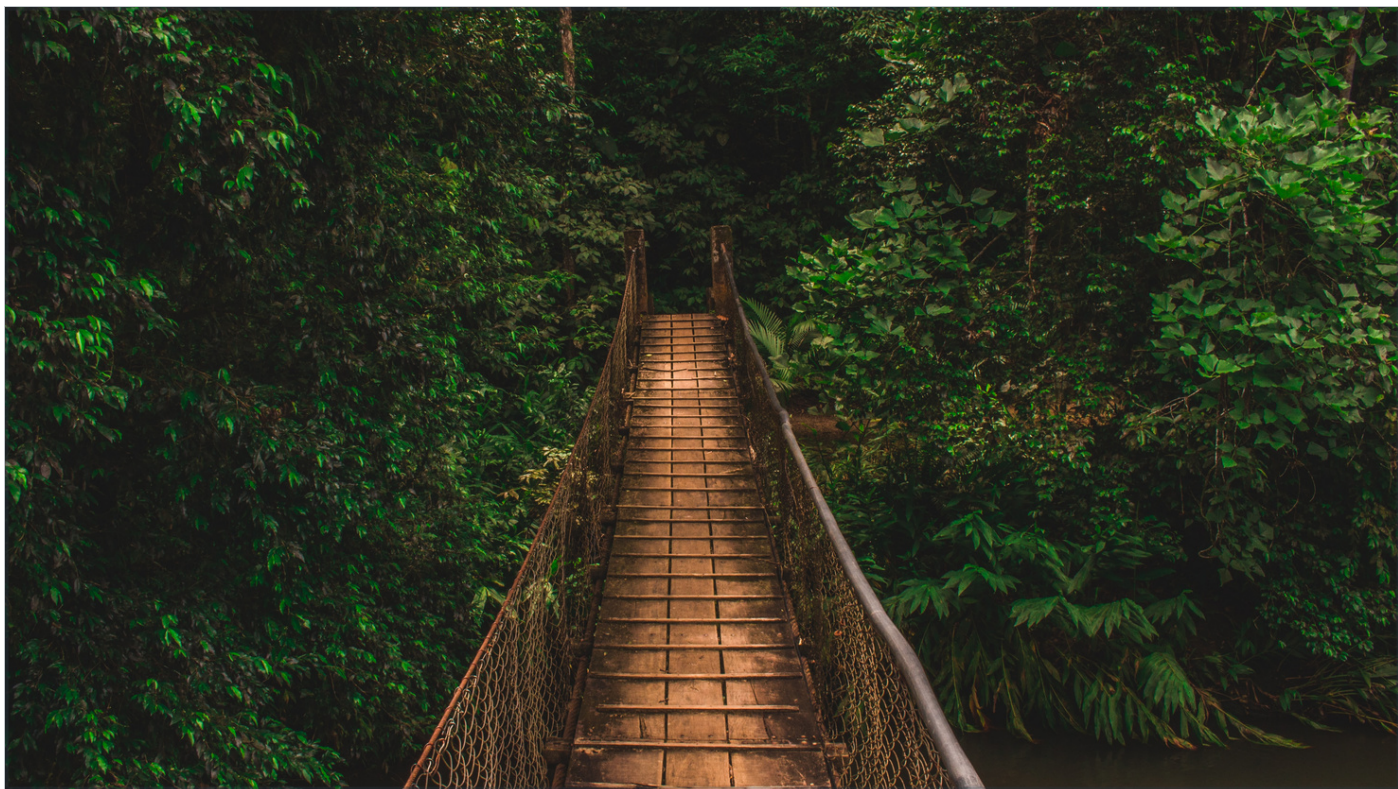
Through being a Reading Coach, I'm able to witness the adversity underprivileged youth face. I became aware of the learning gap between underprivileged youth and privileged youth, and am able to see how much can be done in support.



As a grant funded agency, I have to give reports. I asked my reading coaches the following question:

" has your opinion about marginali"ed youth changed since volunteering in our program and if so, how?"

Here's the answers I received:



DID YOU HEAR THOSE QUOTES I just shared? A Bridge goes two ways and that's how we create systemic change in our country.

By being a bridge where people can cross invisible barriers that put us at odds with one another. By giving people opportunities to get to know others with whom they never would have interacted.

A MODEL FOR AFTERSCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION

Cost and commitment

**STRONG
SUPPORT**

**ON SITE AND
ONLINE**

SCALABLE

Estimated first year costs (10 students)*

Great Leaps Subscriptions	\$2000
Key Personnel Training	\$500
Site Visit	\$800
Volunteer Training	\$450
Background Checks	\$200
Initial Student Assessment	\$300
Weekly Consultations	\$2160
Data Management and Reporting	\$900
Final Student Assessment	\$300
Total	\$7610

Once your program is in place, costs per student decrease to approximately \$520 per student in the second year, allowing you to scale up at a lower cost.

*Only an estimate; we will develop personal proposal based on your needs.

This is just a sample implementation model. We work with you to establish a plan that works best for the location of the intervention (school, home, afterschool, detention center, etc)

A Model for Afterschool Implementation

\$750 per year/student

Strong support:

train key personnel

weekly coaching

manage data

monthly reports

pre and post assessments

Capacity building

On site and online: We'll start training your key personnel in the summer, helping them learn the technology, plan for recruitment, and develop a management system. When it's time to launch, our director will travel to your school to be present for the first two days of implementation. Further training will be done online, but if further site trips are needed, we can plan for those as well.

Scalable: With trained leadership and systems in place, our program is scalable to the size your organization needs. We recommend starting with ten students in your first year and then working with us to design a plan for future growth!



Everyone means everyone

This conference is called Everyone Reading. Everyone means everyone. This is not just an Alachua County problem. This is a FL problem. This is a NY problem. This is a National problem. And has been for far too long! Our schools are reaping the harvest of neglect. How are kids to blame for repeated absences and classroom disruptions when what we are teaching them is irrelevant? We are asking them to jump off high dives when they can barely tread water! Let's end the stigma that the child or the family is at fault. The problem is not the children, nor the parents - the problem is the systems.

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Leah Galione

GNV Bridge Literacy Program Director

**Tell Me
More**



I am here to help! Please get in contact with me if you have any questions!