

Reading Reform Foundation Articles

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by **Donald L. Potter**

Prepared August 23, 2019

1. Why America Still Has a Reading Problem – And it has nothing to do with “dyslexia.”
Delivered at the 13th Annual Conference of the RRF. May 16, 1974 in Washington, DC., by
Samuel Blumenfeld.

<http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/sam-blumenfeld--why.pdf>

2. Twenty Years After Flesch: Are the New Basal Reading Programs Doing the Job? May 23,
1975. 14th Annual RRF Conference. By Sam Blumenfeld.

<http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/flesch20yrs-blumenfeld.pdf>

3. Children Taught with Look-Say Method Lack All Sense Precision of Letters. Speech from
May 1976 *Reading Informer*. Another excellent article by Samuel Blumenfeld.

<http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/blumenfelds-rrf-speech.pdf>

4. The next file was a study basically commissioned by Watson Washburn when he asked Sam
Blumenfeld to join the RRF. Sam did not know there was a reading problem at the time so he
started subbing in schools to see for himself. He was so shocked at the low state of literacy that
he wrote *The New Illiterates*. These are my notes from that book. Sam was one of the intellectual
giants of the 20th Century.

<http://donpotter.net/pdf/new-illiterates-quotes.pdf>

5. Memorial for Watson Washburn, RRF Founder, January 1974 *Reading Informer*. He passed
away on December 2, 1974. There is an article by Washburn from another source.

<http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/watson-wasburn-spb.pdf>

6. McMahon’s Syndrome by William C. McMahon of Danbury State College. Delivered at the
4th Annual Reading Reform Conference on August 5, 1965 at the Waldorf-Astoria Grand
Ballroom New York, NY. A very important article.

http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/mchahon_syndrome.pdf

7. The Reading Problem: Its Roots and its Fruits. 4th Annual RRF Conference, August 5, 1965. The Waldor-Astoria Grand Ballroom, NY. Also includes excellent article “Concerning Context Clues and Meaning Emphasis.”

http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/walcutt_rrf_1965.pdf

8. Patrick Groff. Myths of Reading Instruction – and why they live so long. The RRF Conference Report, July 22-24 Indianapolis, IN.

http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/myths_of_reading_instructio.pdf

9. Patrick Groff. “Sight Words Are the Humpty-Dumpty of Education, Says Reading Professor.” Delivered at the 14th Annual Conference of the RRF, May 23-24, 1975. *Reading Informer*, 1975.

http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/groff_sight_words-1975.pdf

10. Pat Groff. “The arguments are different, but The New Anti-Phonics is Same Old Look-Say. *Reading Informer*, Vol. 6, No. 1 – October, 1978. 17th Annual Conference of the RRF, July 20-26, Boise, Idaho.

http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/groff_new_anti-phonics.pdf

11. Michael Brunner. “Vowelectomy – A Fatal Reading Operation. 21st Annual Conference of the RRF. July 9-11, 1982. Sept. 1982 *Reading Informer*.

http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/brunner_vowelectomy.pdf

12. “Michael Brunner’s Address to the General Session of the 1985 RRF Conference.” This is full in important historical information.

http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/michael_-brunner_rrfc_1985.pdf

13. Helen Lowe’s Speech to the Second Annual RRF Conference, August 7, 1963. There are links to Lowe’s articles from other sources.

http://www.donpotter.net/pdf/helen_lowe_speech.pdf

14. Charlie Richardson. Most of this document is not from the RRF files, but there is a chart. The Foundations of Literacy that I took from a 1984 RRF Conference Report.

<http://donpotter.net/pdf/reading-charlie-richardson.pdf>

15. “Abstracts from Two Phonics Stalwarts: Professor Charles C. Walcutt and Dr. Rudolf Flesch.” These “abstracts” were taken from the January 1983 edition of the Reading Reformer. Walcutt correctly called Whole Language “An Empire of Misinformation.” Flesch talked about a “detoxification program” to help people kick the pernicious habit of word-guessing. I have made a career of helping students do just that.

<http://donpotter.net/pdf/rrfabstracts.pdf>

16. Arther Trace, Jr. “Roger Joikl’s Revenge.” He read this at the 12th Annual RRF Conference on May 4 & 5, 1973 at The Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel, Cleveland Ohio. Years later Romalda Spalding read this at the RRF Conference. I did not note when, maybe a decade later. Two of my children learned with Trace’s Open Court Program, one of the best ever published. It was in the forefront of the Reading Wars on the side of phonics, until it was utterly corrupted by SRA/McGraw-Hill in a later edition of the same name but radically difference in approach and results. I personally taught my son to read with the old Open Court!

<http://donpotter.net/pdf/new-illiterates-quotes.pdf>

17. Mary Johnson won the 1979 *Washburn Memorial for Excellence in Education*. I have collected as much information concerning her as I have been able. She was a fearless advocate for phonics and a relentless enemy of look-say. I actually have complete set of her fine ESL materials, which I hope to publish someday.

<http://donpotter.net/pdf/mary-johnsons-2-sentence.pdf>

18. “From Theory to Practice in Reading” by Dr. Sylvia Farnham-Diggory. Basically, a defense of *Spalding’s Writing Road* to Reading from the viewpoint of a cognitive psychologist.

http://donpotter.net/pdf/farhman-diggory_wrtr.pdf

19. Dr. Jay Samuels. “Automatic decoding, its role in comprehension.” From *The Reading Informer*, Vol. 7, No. 1 – October 1979. Presented at the RRF Conference in July in Boise, Idaho.

http://donpotter.net/pdf/samuels_automatic_decoding.pdf

20. I have included information on Hazel Logan Loring’s Blend Phonics from RRF Publications at the end of my free pdf edition of *Reading Made Easy with Blend Phonics for First Grade*.

http://donpotter.net/pdf/reading_made_easy_with_blen.pdf

21. Hazel Loring won the Washburn Memorial for Excellence in Education in 1982.

<http://donpotter.net/pdf/loringaward.pdf>

22. Here is an article Loring wrote for the Reading Informer in 1979. I believe this is before she wrote her Blend Phonics. Her daughter, Pat Lent, introduced her to the RRF.

<http://donpotter.net/pdf/loringarticlerrf.pdf>

23. Here is “In Tribute to Hazel Loring” by Mr. Lloyd Loring. This was published in the 1984 Reading Reformer.

http://donpotter.net/pdf/loring_tribute.pdf

Here is the entire Third RRF Conference Report published by Camp Constitution. We hope they eventually republish all these valuable materials.

<http://blumenfeld.campconstitution.net/Transcripts/19640805%203rd%20Annual%20Reading%20Reform%20Foundation%20Conference.pdf>

I would like someday to write a *History of the RRF and Its Signal Contribution to Reading Ability in America*.

Raymond Laurita was a popular speaker at the RRF Conferences. I did not include any of his material since I have published many of his essays on my website. He was a leading scholar in the fight against look-say and sight words.

I have a complete set of Reading Informers and RRF Conference Reports thanks to Samuel Blumenfeld and Kathy Diehl (the Research Director for the RRF). I read every one in order to select the ones I felt were most important and needed to be preserved and made available to researchers. The information is timeless.

The late Bob Sweet started the *Right to Read Foundation* when the old RRF was disbanded.

Visit www.blendphonics.org for Mr. Potter’s *Blend Phonics Nationwide Educational Campaign*.

This document was last edited by Mr. Potter. on August 24, 2019.