



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA SUBJECT MATTER PROJECT
IN READING AND LITERATURE
AFTER SCHOOL READING PRACTICE PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2004, the leadership of the California Reading and Literature project, an educational program administered by the Regents of the University of California, was asked to evaluate two reading skills programs *Adventure Phonics* and *Master English* for possible use in community- and school-based programs. Recent California state tests of students showed unambiguously that significant numbers of California's students did not master basic reading skills in the regular school setting and needed additional practice with them.

A decision was made to conduct a study on *Adventure Phonics*. This study sought to answer two questions: 1) Did students who participated in *Adventure Phonics* make statistically significant gains in phonic knowledge, and 2) were tutors with little or no training as teachers able to successfully administer the *Adventure Phonics* program? A design consisting of pre- and post-tests of student performance was developed and carried out. The design also analyzed tutor performance levels. This was achieved by administering assessments of tutor confidence to administer the games in *Adventure Phonics* before and after a two-day professional development conference on them. Also included in the research design were observations of actual tutor performance.

Analysis of data showed that students engaged in the *Adventure Phonics* program made statistically significant gains in phonic skills. The data also showed that with only a two-day professional development session, the tutors were much more confident about their ability to administer the program and, when observed, administered *Adventure Phonics* sufficiently well for students to be highly successful.

The success of the *Adventure Phonics* program provided the impetus to examine the components found in *Master English*. Analysis showed that some components could be used and that new components needed to be developed. A final recommendation was that the components of both *Adventure Phonics* and *Master English* be compacted into a single phonics skills practice kit. The recommendations were accepted and work was begun that eventuated into "**Get, Set, Read.**" Three major changes from the original kits were included in "**Get, Set, Read.**" The first was to change the phonic charts and other items to reflect American pronunciation of words rather than the original British; second, additional games were developed so that the new kit covered the entire range of basic phonic skills as reflected on the commonly

used test in California—the Basic Phonics Skills Test (BPST); and third, the games were restructured so that participants were required to learn the phonic rules behind the games, rather than just develop an intuitive understanding of them.

Five additional criteria were attached to the “**Get, Set, Read**” kit. The five were that they must be **affordable** (must reflect the sparse resources of after-school programs), **accessible** (must be easily used by tutors largely untrained in reading methods), **comprehensible** (must address critical aspects of a reader’s literacy needs), **complementary** (must extend and expand the reading skill training students already received in school, and **supportive** (must be aligned with California’s academic standards).

After several years of development and revision, “**Get, Set, Read**” is now complete. It includes the changes thought necessary to the prior programs and also fulfills the five criteria stated above. “**Get, Set, Read**” should prove even more effective than its predecessors in helping students learn critical reading skills by providing them the opportunity to practice them in a fun interactive way.

The California Reading and Literature Project, in conjunction with the Regents of the University of California, is committed to developing further kits so that in the near future the entire range of basic literacy skills are produced in equally fun, interactive kits for the benefit of students who need additional practice in after-school settings to master needed reading skills.

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