

Teaching reading - when it seems impossible

By Cathy Ash

Karen Truncellito is a special person.

A resident of Exton, Truncellito is a tutor and former classroom teacher who specializes in reading.

She has written a book, based on the development of a reading method she perfected to teach reading to students previously found unable to read.

The book, entitled *Easy Steps to Reading*, is a self-published manual of her alternative approach to reading for students with learning disabilities. Over the last 12 years, the technique has been proven successful with students ranging in age from four to adult and varying in ability from average to severely disabled.

"I haven't lost a child yet," said Truncellito in a phone interview. "It does take time, but the technique works," she continued. She recounted her discovery of the method almost twelve years ago, when tutoring a little boy with severe memory problems.

"Conventional methods just didn't work for him," explained Truncellito. She added that she began to explore other techniques to find a workable solution. "The approach is a phonetic one, but it is unconventional," she said.

"This technique starts in the middle of a word," explained Truncellito. "Students blend the vowel to the end, then add the beginning sound to form the word," she explained.

"Most memory deficient students lose the word before they are done sounding it out using the conventional beginning to end method," Truncellito said. "This method cuts the four step process to two, making it easier and quicker."

Truncellito begins students with vowel sounds in the middle of a word. From there, she has them blend the vowel with the ending sounds. "Going

from the blend of the vowel and the end sound is the first step," she explains. "Then students add the beginning sound to form the word," she added.

Students are taught groups of similar words at a time, with common endings and different beginnings, to increase their vocabulary. "It's a code to allow them to pronounce words and learn to read," explained Truncellito.

"I've researched a lot and I have found that this is the best and easiest method to teach reading," said Truncellito.

"Parents can easily teach children using this method," said Truncellito. "It's essential for parents to get involved and take action to help their children read," she added.

"If children would be caught early enough, there wouldn't be the kinds of self-esteem problems that exist with non-readers at a later age," continued Truncellito. "We could avoid the self-esteem problems that children all over the county are facing," she said.

According to Truncellito, children should be tested "the earlier the better." She advocates testing for reading ability in Kindergarten to enable preventative measures to be taken before severe problems develop.

"It often takes a lot of time and responsibility to teach these students how to read - but it is nothing that cannot be done," said Truncellito. "I am willing to address any group that would like to know more about this method," she added.

Truncellito received her undergraduate degree from St. Joseph's College in Brooklyn, and her Master's in Education from Fordham University in NYC. She taught in the New York City school system and at Sts. Philip and James School in Chester County, prior to developing the reading method and turning to private tutoring.

Parents and educators can obtain free information about Truncellito's method by sending a business sized, SASE to Karen Truncellito, 103 Wilson Circle, Exton, PA 19341 or by calling 363-1484 or 1-800-285-3017.

The book, *Easy Steps to Reading* is available for \$33.95 from Truncellito. "The cost of the book just covers the expenses," explained Truncellito, who self-published the manual. "My goal is to put an affordable method in the hands of parents and teachers to enable students who would otherwise be unable to read achieve their goals," she explained.