

the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased in the UK (Mental Health Act 1983, 1994).

There is a growing awareness of the need to improve the lives of people with mental health problems. The Department of Health (1999) has set out a strategy for mental health care in the UK. The strategy is based on the following principles:

- People with mental health problems should be treated as individuals.
- People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to participate in decisions about their care.
- People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in their own homes.

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“My colleagues and I attribute this tremendous success to incredibly talented educators who continue to teach these Direct Instruction programs with complete fidelity,” Airhart said. “We never would have experienced this kind of success without Dr. Michael Martin’s help (Director of Schools). He gave teachers 100% support to effectively implement the program.”

While \_\_\_\_\_ is proven to help readers in elementary and middle school, it is designed for anyone who struggles with reading, including teenagers and adults. That’s why Airhart introduced the program into the district’s high schools after she witnessed success in the middle schools.

Airhart was so impressed with the reading results in K–8 that she wrote her dissertation based on a study she conducted analyzing the effects of integrating \_\_\_\_\_ into language arts resource classes as compared to classes using the adopted textbook and state standards exclusively. The study involved 104 adolescent learning-disabled Grade 9 and 10 students at three district high schools. The goal was to determine if a specific reading intervention program like \_\_\_\_\_ could make a difference in reading abilities, as measured by tests of decoding, spelling, and comprehension.

“Within 15 weeks, several Grade 9 students, who had never been exposed to \_\_\_\_\_ until then, made three- and four-year gains,” she explained. “The most astounding results for high school students, though, were found in an attitude survey. We discovered that students in \_\_\_\_\_ had greatly improved attitudes toward reading. Before the program began, 34% had an overall positive response to reading. After \_\_\_\_\_, 70% reported positive attitudes, while the comparison group remained at 34%.”

At the conclusion of the study, she found statistical significance in spelling and comprehension abilities among students exposed to \_\_\_\_\_. In addition, greater mean gains were achieved by those same students in all decoding, spelling, and comprehension tests.

“The beauty of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ is both programs take students from absolutely any individual reading level to mastery,” Airhart said. “The bottom line is this: these programs really do work. Non-readers can become proficient readers, despite educational disabilities and socioeconomic status.”

### **About Putnam County Schools**

Located in the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee, Putnam County is 90 miles from Nashville. The district consists of 18 schools serving approximately 9,918 students. The student population is 91% Caucasian, 6% Hispanic, 2% African American, and 1% Asian. Forty-seven percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, 5% have limited English proficiency, and 17% have learning disabilities. For more information about Putnam County Schools, visit [www.putnamcountyschools.com](http://www.putnamcountyschools.com).



**For More Information**

If you would like to learn more about success with Direct Instruction programs in your school or district, please contact us today at **1-888-SRA-4543**.

