Imagine It! Reading takes you places

The Open Court Legacy for Effective Reading Instruction
The Open Court Legacy for Effective Reading Instruction

The Beginning:
Critical Instructional Strategies and Effective Teaching Tools

The Open Court Reading program grew out of the belief that young children should be reading authentic literature as well as expository selections. The authors believed the contrived stories of the basal readers just weren’t engaging enough. Finding the appropriate literature was the easy part. The challenge was developing the instructional strategies and tools critical to enable children to read literature as early as first grade.

From Research to Practice:
Explicit Phonics and Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Prior to program development, the authors conducted research in the field of beginning reading. All the data pointed to the importance of early and explicit phonics instruction. Open Court Phonics put the research into practice with color-coded Sound/Spelling Cards, explicit sound and spelling instruction, and scaffolded blending to teach decoding as well as encoding.

Decodable Books were developed to enable children to apply their skill knowledge, resulting in greater fluency and automaticity.

From Research to Practice:
Essential Vocabulary and Comprehension Skills

Initially, Open Court focused on the primary grades. The early successes in teaching beginning reading with Open Court were so encouraging that the program was expanded to Grade 6. Again, the authors relied on research, this time focusing on vocabulary and comprehension.

More advanced literature and expository selections were integrated into the units. Vocabulary and critical comprehension strategies, such as summarizing and predicting, formed the foundation of the comprehension instruction.

The addition of a language arts strand integrated writing, spelling, grammar, usage and mechanics into a complete K–6 reading and language arts program.

Continually Evolving:
Meeting Changing Student and Teacher Needs

Open Court Reading was field tested to encourage extensive teacher feedback prior to publication. Open Court has continued to evolve over the years and the changes in the program have been driven by two key principles: research results and teacher feedback.

From a beginning reading program with literature at its heart, Open Court Reading emerged into a comprehensive reading and writing series for students in Grades Pre-K–6. Open Court Reading has been utilized with documented success in schools and districts from a wide range of social and economic realities.
Imagine It:
A Proven Instructional Plan

Open Court Reading has always been known as the program that gets children reading and comprehending at an early age. Imagine It! continues that storied history of explicit, systematic instruction across the five areas of reading by providing:

- phonemic awareness through explicit lessons designed to scaffold and support students as they develop the necessary foundational skills to become beginning readers.
- explicit and systematic phonics instruction, using seven steps to teach decoding and encoding skills through the use of highly effective Sound/Spelling Cards.
- vocabulary instruction that puts into practice the latest research in order to teach children the necessary skills to develop the robust vocabulary needed to be successful in school.
- comprehension strategy and skill instruction that scaffolds learning so students will become actively engaged in reading while using research-proven comprehension strategies and skills to monitor comprehension.
- fluency instruction and practice using decodable books, leveled readers, and timed readings to ensure students can read accurately, fluently, and with expression.

From Open Court Reading to Imagine It!:
The Legacy Continues for Today’s Classrooms

Imagine It! is the most recent edition of Open Court Reading. Like its predecessors, the program:

- relies on research-based instruction, teacher input, and learner verification.
- incorporates wonderful children’s literature including fiction and nonfiction to spark the imagination.
- contains a strong beginning reading strand to give all students equal access to learning.
- provides students with the tools to comprehend what they are reading and the skills to write effectively.

Imagine It! is the most explicit, systematic program available to meet the needs of all learners.

See the proven results of Open Court Reading starting on page 8.
Revisions that Make a Difference:

Educators Know Best

During the development of Imagine It! the publisher, SRA/McGraw-Hill, met with core groups of administrators and teachers from across the country. These Advisory Boards met several times over two years to talk about the strengths of the program and the improvements required to meet the needs of today’s classrooms. Feedback from educators indicated that revisions in the nine key areas listed below would make the program more effective and easier to teach:

- Ease-of-use features for better instruction and classroom management
- Practice, extension and intervention tools
- Increased vocabulary instruction and practice
- Focused and integrated fluency instruction
- A more robust writing strand
- Additional inquiry instruction
- Stronger English Learner support
- Enhanced assessment tools
- A full spectrum of integrated technology

Ease-of-Use Features for Better Instructional and Classroom Management

- Getting Started lessons were expanded to include assessment and progress monitoring to review and apply previously learned skills; and to set up instructional routines.
- A classroom management system was added to ensure a positive start to the school year.
- New test prep activities at the end of each unit of the Student Reader in Grades 1–6 provide test-taking practice with test-taking strategies.
- Specific, targeted activities in the Teacher’s Edition support differentiation of instruction at the point-of-use in all parts of the lesson.
- A user-friendly Teacher’s Edition includes easy-to-follow directions, specific icons, and clearly organized lessons.
- Clear identification of the five areas of reading keeps instruction focused and integrated and makes lesson planning easier.
- A review in the final week of each unit was added as well as time to administer Lesson and/or Benchmark Assessments.
Practice, Extension and Intervention Tools

- **Leveled Readers** provide practice in vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency at four levels of instruction: On Level, Approaching Level, Above Level, and English Learner.
- **Workshop Kits** provide specific and targeted activities to meet the needs of all learners. Games are included to offer alternative ways to practice skills.
- **Skills Practice components** offer practice for each lesson's skill instruction.
- **Reteach components** provide alternative ways to explain and reinforce each lesson's skills and activities for additional practice.
- **Intervention components** supply help for tier 2 students to participate in the basic program.
- **English Learner components** assist students who are still working toward proficiency with the English language.
- **Challenge Activities** extend practice for Above-Level students.
- **Challenge Novels** in Grades 4–6 extend student's understanding and engage Above Level students.

Increased Vocabulary Instruction and Practice

- Increased Vocabulary instruction focuses on Tier 2 words.
- A **Vocabulary Warm-Up** before every reading selection preteaches the selection's vocabulary.
- Additional vocabulary practice opportunities are available in the Leveled Readers.
- Expanding vocabulary focuses on Tier 2 and Tier 3 words and is called out throughout the reading of each selection.

Focused and Integrated Fluency Instruction

- **Leveled Readers** directly support the unit themes, build fluency, and help to differentiate instruction.
- Integrated science and social studies in the *Leveled Science Readers* and *Leveled Social Studies Readers* allow cross-curricular connections in the reading block.
- **Curriculum Connections** cards related to science, social studies, math, and art encourage fluency and “cold reads” with nonfiction.
- Focused fluency instruction throughout the program addresses accuracy, rate, and prosody.
A More Robust Writing Strand
- Increased writing instruction covers all aspects of the writing process.
- Timed writing instruction prepares students for standardized writing tests.
- Grammar, usage, and mechanics is integrated into writing instruction.
- Writing connects to reading with a new feature called “Reading with a Writer’s Eye.”

Additional Inquiry instruction
- Pictures of real Concept/Question Boards are included for each unit.
- Specific ideas and activities are provided in the Teacher’s Edition to support inquiry.
- Rubrics are included for all aspects of the inquiry process.

Stronger English Learner Support
- *English Learner Support Guide* preteaches, reteaches, and reviews activities for students at four different levels: Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, and Early Advanced.
- *English Learner Support Activities* provides additional practice in phonics, word analysis, vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Enhanced Assessment Tools
- A suggested assessment plan for making Adequate Yearly Progress is provided.
- Lesson assessments include summative and formative assessments based on the five areas of reading.
- Initial screening assessments and Benchmark Assessments ensure ongoing monitoring of student progress.
- Cutoff scores to help identify students at risk for reading failure are provided.
- *Monitor Progress* boxes at point of use throughout the lesson provide specific activities to differentiate instruction and to monitor progress of students who are Approaching Level, On Level, Above Level, or English Learners.
A Full Spectrum of Integrated Technology

Unlike many other programs whose technology offerings focus on games and practice activities, Imagine It! includes enhanced technology components, all of which are white board compatible. These include:

- **ePlanner** – Allows teachers online access to all print materials. This time-saving tool reduces preparation and planning by giving teachers pre-populated lesson plans and links to all Blackline Masters.

- **eTeacher’s Edition** – A convenient electronic format provides access to the entire Teacher’s Edition.

- **ePresentation** – Presents the main features of the Teacher’s Edition in an electronic format to visually enhance instruction.

- **eInquiry** – Challenges students to build their creative and critical skills while learning how to investigate their own questions to find answers.

- **eFluency** – Empowers teachers to monitor students’ fluency. Students can record themselves reading passages from the Fluency Readers; teachers may then use the data to calculate fluency scores.

- **eStudent Reader** – Student Reader content comes alive in an exciting, interactive format. The content can be projected in the classroom or viewed at home for homework and to involve parents in student learning.

- **eSkills & eGames** – Provides hundreds of fun, learning-based activities for ongoing practice with key skills in phonics, spelling, writing, and vocabulary.

- **eAssess** – Gives teachers the flexibility to generate customized tests that are quickly and automatically scored and stored. Teachers save time by using or modifying existing question banks, and by using a variety of automatic reports that help track student progress and offer effective remediation suggestions.
Imagine It! A Proven Foundation for Success

Imagine being able to impact all students in the classroom—from those who struggle with reading to those who excel at it. Imagine implementing the most proven philosophy for teaching children to read. Imagine It! provides a validated foundation for the critical reading instruction students need to become fluent, proficient, and motivated readers.

A true research-based program is one crafted using thoroughly researched strategies. The research base used to develop Imagine It! spans more than 45 years—significantly longer than most other reading programs.

The foundational program of Imagine It! has consistently proven its effectiveness with diverse populations of students across the country for over four decades. Below are snapshots of success from locations nationwide.

The McRae Report: A Comparison Study

Douglas J. McRae, an educational measurement specialist, analyzed Stanford 9 test scores from the STAR program to determine how successful Open Court schools in California have been compared to other schools on measures of reading achievement. The results provide clear and convincing evidence documenting the comparative superiority of the Open Court program.

This study focuses on total reading scores from the STAR program for Grades 2 and 3 and compares gain scores in the Open Court schools to statewide average gain scores. A total of 293 schools from 41 school districts in California were identified as using Open Court Reading as their core program during the 1998-2001 school years. For each of the grade levels included in this study, there were more than 25,000 students. The gain score is defined as the percent of students testing at or above the 50th percentile for Total Reading in Spring 2001, minus the percent of students testing at or above the 50th percentile for Total Reading in Spring 1998, for each grade level at each school.

The study also made use of a comparison group of 274 randomly selected schools, chosen to be demographically similar to the Open Court group. In addition, it was possible to conduct statistical hypothesis testing for gain score differences involved in this study:

- Differences between Open Court school gains and statewide gains.
- Differences between Open Court school gains and non-Open Court comparison group school gains.
- Differences between gain scores for several subcategories of schools.
Open Court schools had higher gain scores statewide

Gain scores for Grades 2 and 3 were calculated for all 5,025 school buildings in California with students enrolled at these grade levels. These gain scores provide a context for the interpretation of Open Court gain scores. Statewide, the gain scores for total reading were 12.5% for Grade 2 and 9.3% for Grade 3. For schools identified for this study, the gain scores for total reading in Grade 2 were 19.2% for Open Court schools, compared to 12.3% for non-Open Court schools. For Grade 3, Open Court schools’ gain scores were 12.7% while non-Open Court schools showed only a 7.3% gain.

The data in the graph indicate that for Grade 2, the gains for Open Court schools were very meaningful gains. These gains were substantially greater than both the statewide gains and the comparison group school gains. For Grade 3, the Open Court gains were meaningful gains and were also larger than both the statewide gains and the comparison group gains.

Open Court provided the largest gain scores for schools with high concentrations of both LEP (Limited English Proficient) and Low-SES (Socio-Economic Status) students

For the categories of schools identified by a cluster analysis, gain scores were available for both the Open Court schools and the demographically similar non-Open Court schools (comparison group schools).

Results were:

These data show that the most significant gains occurred in Open Court Low SES schools. These data also show that the largest differences between Open Court and non-Open Court schools occurred in schools with high concentrations of both LEP and Low-SES students.
A study of more than 700 schools showed Open Court schools with higher gain scores than non-Open Court schools

In 2001, the study was expanded to include analysis of 1-year gain scores from Spring 2000 to Spring 2001 for more than 700 schools enrolling 375,000 students. The results show gain scores several times higher for Open Court schools, indicating clearly meaningful gains considering the number of schools contributing to the analysis.

![Graph showing gain scores for Grade 2 and Grade 3]

Conclusion: Open Court makes the difference

The results of this study provide clear and convincing evidence that students attending schools using Open Court materials acquire basic reading skills at a faster rate than students attending demographically similar schools not using Open Court materials.

For a full copy of the report, visit ImagineItReading.com.
Leon County Schools

Reading Scores Are Consistently High

In 1998, Leon County Schools first began piloting an earlier edition of SRA's Imagine It! known as Open Court Reading. At that time, only 32% of the district schools obtained an A or B from the state of Florida. By 2004, that total was up 40 percentage points, and in 2007, 74% achieved an A or B!

- Leon County Schools was the only district in the state of Florida to meet Adequate Yearly Progress two years in a row; 2004 and 2005.
- Leon County Schools also ranked #1 on FCAT Grade 5 reading scores last year.
- In 2008, Leon County voted to continue its partnership with SRA/McGraw-Hill by adopting Imagine It! district-wide in Grades K–5.

Gulliver Academy

Consistently Scoring Far Above the National Average in Reading

Founded in 1927, Gulliver Academy is one of the oldest private schools in Miami-Dade County. It serves more than 1,000 students in Pre-K–8 from approximately 50 countries. In 1970, educators at Gulliver Academy chose Open Court Reading for students in Grades 1–4 and transitioned to Imagine It! in fall 2007.

Since the original adoption, students have consistently scored far above the national average (50th percentile) in reading. In 2007, Grade 1 students ranked in the 98th percentile compared to all other students nationwide on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).

National Percentile Ranks of Gulliver Academy’s Grade 1 Students

Source: ITBS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Harlem Students Regularly Outscore Regional Peers

Soon after educators at Sisulu-Walker Charter School implemented *Open Court Reading* in Grades K–2 in fall 2005, they began to observe more and more students attaining benchmark status on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Students are the highest performing in the region, often scoring 40–50 points higher than their peers.

Sisulu-Walker Charter School was the first to receive charter status in New York. This Title I school serves approximately 225 students in Grades K–5: 60% African American, 30% African, and 10% Hispanic. Eighty percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

Hale Road Elementary School

Ohio School Becomes District Leader in Reading

Hale Road Elementary School, located 25 miles east of Cleveland, serves more than 360 children from low to middle-income homes in Grades K–5. Thirty-two percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

In just a few years, Hale Road Elementary School transformed itself from a low-performing school to a district leader in reading scores. The percentage of Grade 4 students passing the reading portion of the Ohio Achievement Test jumped from 74% in 2002, before *Open Court Reading* began, to 87% the following year. By 2007, the percentage soared to 96. Teachers began using *Imagine It!* with kindergartners in fall 2007 and expect to add the program to successive grades each year.
Virginia School District Closes Achievement Gap

Once Carroll County Schools implemented *Open Court Reading* in Grades Pre-K–5 district-wide in fall 2003, students’ scores on Virginia’s state assessment increased dramatically, and the academic achievement gap began to close. By 2006, the percentage of all Grade 3 students passing the state reading test nearly doubled (85) as compared to 2003 (45), and the percentage of low-income students passing more than doubled (79) as compared to 2003 (37). The achievement gap completely closed in Grade 4 in 2007 when 84% of all students, including those with low-incomes, passed reading.

Serving approximately 4,000 students in Grades Pre-K–12, this district’s student population is 95% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic, and 1% multiethnic. Fifty percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

---

**Percentage of Carroll County Students Passing Reading**

*Source: Standards of Learning (SOL)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3 All</th>
<th>Grade 3 Low Income</th>
<th>Grade 4 All*</th>
<th>Grade 4 Low Income**</th>
<th>Grade 5 All</th>
<th>Grade 5 Low Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Before *Open Court Reading* began.
** Test was not given in 2003–2005 for Grade 4.
Students with Disabilities Attain Reading Proficiency

While reading success is now prevalent at Bonneville Elementary School, this wasn’t the case before Open Court Reading was implemented. In fact, only 52% of Grade 5 students scored Proficient or Advanced in reading on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in 2002. By 2007, 77% attained that same level, an increase of 25 percentage points. In addition, the state of Florida has continuously awarded the school an A grade since the adoption. Imagine It! will be implemented in fall 2008 in Grades 3–5.

Serving approximately 600 students in Grades Pre-K–5, this elementary school’s population is 50% Caucasian, 37% Hispanic, 7% multiethnic, and 6% African American. Fifty-five percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, 18% are classified as English language learners, and 25% are eligible for exceptional student education services.
Reading Scores at Idaho Elementary School Double

Once educators at this elementary school adopted a research-based reading curriculum in fall 2003, the percentage of students reading at grade level began to increase. By 2007, those percentages had more than doubled in Grades 2 and 3, compared to 2003. Principal Cindy Dodd and Instructional Coach Jacque Scott agree: Implementing *Open Court Reading* with fidelity, coupled with professional development, is the reason for their success.

West Canyon Elementary School serves nearly 700 students in Grades Pre-K–5. This school’s student population is 74% Caucasian, 24% Hispanic, and 2% multiethnic. Forty-nine percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, 4% are transient, and 11% are English language learners.

There was a slight decline in 2007 scores because of greater student mobility, increased class sizes, and an increase in non-English-speaking students.

### Summary

*Imagine It!* is the next generation of the highly successful *Open Court Reading* program. Changes have been made, based on teacher feedback and ongoing research, to make the program easier to teach without changing the instructional foundation. With *Imagine It!* teachers and administrators can implement a program that has had proven, long-term effectiveness with teachers and students across the country.

For more information, visit ImagineItReading.com.
"We will begin using SRA’s Imagine It! program at the start of the 2008-2009 school year. We began using SRA’s Open Court Reading program four years ago because our students were not reaching the level of success they should. I had experience with Open Court Reading and many area schools were getting results with it, so with staff agreement, we decided to switch to this research-based program. We felt the explicit, systematic approach would benefit our students. Since, we’ve absolutely seen results. Teachers teach better with SRA’s reading program, and for the first time ever, we achieved 100% AYP in 2007."

—Wayne Green, Killarney Elementary Principal, Orlando, Florida

For more information call 1–888–772–4543
ImagineItReading.com
220 E. Danieldale Road • DeSoto, TX 75115–2490