>> Welcome to Closing The Gap solutions.

This webinar introducing Readtopia.

Is your special education curriculum experiential?

Was sponsored by Don Johnston and was recorded February 7th, 2018.

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the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies

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>> Welcome everybody and we thank you for taking your precious time to be with us.

Last week I had a chance to spend quite a bit of time with Karen and

Caroline Musselwhite and a few other teachers using Readtopia at a conference.

We had an evening event and we had

our different components and we had people rotate through and the thing that people

kept coming up to me afterwards and saying was

how passionate our team was about this product.

For those of us who have seen the results of this,

seeing students that were relatively unengaged,

unsuccessful, and really have an opportunity to get the right kind of curriculum.

It's really rewarding and we feel very strongly about it.

We feel that students need to get this curriculum right now.

We've had a really fun time.

It's been several years in the process.

A lot of Karen and Caroline Musselwhite's time and

experience putting this into the design work.

We are going to talk about this and show you all the different components of it.

The thing that we are struck by is the diversity of the classrooms.

The thing that we keep hearing is that we have readers,

and then we have some students that are just working on

basic foundation skills with phonics and basic word study,

and then we have other students that are working on

basic communication and interaction skills.

What our goal was?

Was to develop a curriculum that would meet all these needs.

Naturally for the student that is reading at

what most of you probably know are Start-to-finish gold level books,

which are written at about a second,

third-grade level is that even though students are still not keeping up with their peers.

We needed something that took all students regardless of what their skill level,

what their focus in the classroom is.

How do we make everybody successful?

How do we make every student have progress?

For most of these students,

our goal is to see what's beneath the surface.

It's like this iceberg.

What we see in the classroom is not often what's really going on in the student's head.

We had one story that we got recently

where the teacher really didn't know if the student was paid attention to.

They were working on Readtopia,

our Journey to the Center of the Earth.

The next day, the student brought in a model of the different layers of the Earth.

She was actually stunned that they were paying attention,

went home, and asked

to have materials so that they could make a model of the layers of the Earth.

Our goal with the Readtopia is to give teachers the resources to go beneath the surface,

to touch students and make them successful,

and really hear what's going on.

There is nothing more rewarding for me when I hear a teacher tell a story

about a student and how they

were engaged and finally hearing what's going on in their head.

The goal of Readtopia is really to bring out that potential in each student.

We started out with this curriculum being for middle school,

and high school students.

We've had it in several fourth, fifth grades,

and find depending upon the subject area,

we're finding that it's appropriate for fourth and fifth graders.

We've also had it in several transition classrooms.

For students that are beyond high school and ended at transition,

that need literacy training.

We've really recently expanded the range of students that we're working with.

In designing this curriculum the first thing I did

was bring all the people that I've worked with over the years.

Imagine what it'd be like for you to be able to say,

here are all the people that I've really enjoyed working

with and put them together in a team.

That's what it's been like for me.

Naturally, the first person on my list is Karen Erickson,

who I've just learned so much over the years and we've had so many conversations.

Every time we do a conference,

we usually have an evening together where we are

talking about this stuff and we are talking

about what works and what our experiences are.

I brought Caroline Musselwhite,

Jerry Stemach who many of you might know through Start-to-Finish.

Jerry is responsible for all of our leveling.

Helen Sillett has written a lot of our Start-to-Finish books.

She has a PhD in history.

She writes all of our informational texts.

Mary Krenz is our education and learning specialist,

and she coordinates everything.

She is my right-hand person and does

all the coordination or the layout and putting that stuff on the website.

Carol Seibert is our learning materials specialists.

We have these teacher guides that step teachers step-by-step through,

and you'll see that from Karen each step through the learning process

and we provide as little help in getting students up and running with that.

Last but not least is Mike Byrne who does of our filmmaking.

You'll see that filmmaking is one of the important parts of this program.

Karen.

>> What we've tried to accomplish with Readtopia is to create

a comprehensive instructional program that

addresses all of the standards in English language arts,

certainly at middle school and high school and as Don said,

extending down into the upper grades in elementary school.

It includes all of the reading,

writing, speaking, listening language, and at the same time,

it also teaches some of

those foundational skills that

while they disappear in the standards starting in middle school,

we know that many of our students with more significant disabilities need us to

continue building those skills all the way through high school and beyond.

We also, in creating this,

recognize that if we're going to take the time to teach people how to read and write,

we have to be building their knowledge of the world

because successfully reading with comprehension

requires that you have a base of knowledge that you

can draw upon to help you read and understand.

So in each of the units we addressed

different content standards in social studies and science.

At the core of each of the units in the Readtopia program is a start-to-finish gold book.

That book in each case has some connection to one of these content areas standards.

So there is the literature in the gold book,

but then we've created entire sets of informational texts

that wrap around that gold book in order to provide

students with not just access to but

instruction in how to read and understand a variety of

informational text types like graphs and maps and timelines and

biographies and compare and contrast and directions,

all of those different real types of texts that

we encounter in our day-to-day interactions with the world,

that for too long,

our students with more significant disabilities have never been able to

access in ways that they could learn some of

the core skills they need to get better at dealing with them.

Throughout each one of these units,

we have a big emphasis on language and vocabulary.

In fact, you'll see that the content standards,

social studies or science that are related to each unit,

have been carefully aligned so that

vocabularies introduced that then the students will encounter both

in the literature that they're reading and the chapter book as well

as in the informational text types that they're encountering.

This specific content is absolutely

aligned to topics that we would typically find in middle school and high school.

One of the things that we've tried to do is make these themes as universal as possible.

For example, the westward expansion unit,

that is at the center, is Sacagawea.

While that's clearly a US-centric unit,

it actually teaches that from the perspective of exploration and problem-solving,

and it has a place for students

anywhere who are learning how to read and write and think in English.

Even when a unit seems like it's very US-centric,

we've worked hard to make sure that it have universal themes and

universal application so that we can be using this program across the board.

As we think about these different units,

you'll see that some of them are very clear science-related like space and oceans,

but that we have a good bit of this emphasis on

social studies through Anne Frank, World War II,

Roman Empire, and other areas that

our students typically encounter either in middle school,

high school, or both.

We'll go to the next one, Don.

The instructional components that are built into each one

of the units in Readtopia are multi-component.

Each unit starts with video and that incorporates

video throughout as a way to support students in

really connecting to some of

the background knowledge and some of

the episodes and themes that are built throughout the unit.

As I mentioned before,

we have literature at the center of each of these units,

and that literature is the chapter book as Don described,

but those chapter books have all been rewritten in the form

of graphic novels and the graphic novels are at

multiple levels in order to help teachers differentiate

and have a whole group of students all reading around the same theme,

the same topics, and in fact,

it feels to the students like they have the same book in their hand,

yet the complexity of the text is quite different across the six levels.

The informational texts, there are 10 or more different kinds

of informational texts embedded across the unit,

and those informational texts are also written

at multiple levels in order to support differentiation.

As I mentioned earlier,

while the standards don't address

foundational skills of phonics and word study beyond elementary school,

we continue to build that in as a critical element of Readtopia because

our goal is to continue to build students

core reading and writing skills throughout their school career,

to try to support them in getting as independent as possible,

and for many of our students,

that means that we have to be addressing word study phonics along the way.

We'll go to the next one.

Within each one of these units,

we have tried to be prescriptive without being scripted.

In other words, we're trying to support teachers as much as possible in

knowing what to expect and having a plan that they can depend on,

but the lessons themselves are not highly scripted.

We provide a great deal of support,

and you can see in this particular lesson cycle here that

goes with Chapter 1 of the Sacagawea units,

the westward expansion, teachers would start with

a video lesson with a video about Sacagawea.

They then would do a comprehension lesson using Chapter 1 from the book,

and those comprehension lessons all follow the anchor read, apply format,

and helping students build upon their background knowledge

and use what they know about the world to

read and understand things that they might not know much about.

There are then phonics lessons at two different levels,

and so we support teachers in thinking about dividing

their class up into a groups for the phonics lessons.

There are these close reading lessons and those used

the information texts in order to teach students how

to carefully read and extract information from print,

and then we cycle back to a phonics lesson again.

That's the level of detail that we provide and because of the way Readtopia is delivered,

you can see that we guide people to where they'll find what they need,

either in the book,

the guide that comes with each unit,

or on the website as

a separate resource that you need to download to use for a particular lesson.

>> The first piece that Karen mentioned was the video and that

leads off every thematic unit.

There's three purposes to the videos.

One is to build background knowledge,

and what we find continuously is

that a lot of our students don't have adequate background knowledge in

order to be successful with the novels or be successful with the informational texts.

We had one classroom as a fourth, fifth-grade classroom,

where we were doing Journey to the Center of the Earth and

the students didn't know what dinosaurs were and had never heard of that.

The teacher was just really taken aback that somehow in

their home life or in their earlier education that they had never covered dinosaurs.

So she went back into this and got

in building that background information because without that,

they really can't be successful.

The second purpose of videos is to build vocabulary.

Students, even before they start reading the graphic novels

on their own or in a shared reading experience,

they need to hear vocabulary around that unit over and over again.

If they're studying Journey to the Center of the Earth,

they need to know what the word volcano is and lava,

and there's a whole set of vocabulary that's really critical for their success.

It starts with listening and seeing these units,

and we don't introduce any vocabulary unless showing it graphically,

either through pictures, or in the case of the videos, through videos.

The third purpose of the videos is to introduce visual mental models.

What we want students to do is have pictures in their mind.

Either pictures or movies in their mind,

they really give them the background information

that they need in order to be successful with a thematic unit.

We have two kinds of videos,

one where we take students on a virtual experience.

This is a unit for Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea,

where we actually go 1,000 feet underneath the sea.

That's me photographing.

We want students to have that background experience and build

that vocabulary and visual mental models about what it's like beneath the sea,

that's all laying the foundation for them

to be successful reading about Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea.

Of course, we filmed in the Middle Ages.

We filmed this in England.

In addition to the virtual experiences that we bring students on,

we have actors portray certain things.

So this is Frankenstein,

and of course, Frankenstein is not the monster,

Frankenstein is a scientist.

We have professional actors that portray things like Romeo and Juliet and Frankenstein.

Here these are an actor and actresses that were

professional and did play Romeo and Juliet in Victoria, Canada.

This is our unit on Westward expansion.

Anytime we have an opportunity to have a young person in the videos,

it really worked out well, and certainly,

in Chicago where was a teenager,

when she led that expedition,

and really was highly successful for the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Here, we went up into a P-51 Mustang.

This is a son of Tuskegee Airmen,

and this for our unit on the Tuskegee Airmen that's going to come out later this year.

We put go pros in the cockpit of a P-51,

and we give students the virtual experience of

what it's like to fly into a World War II bomber plane.

All that is exciting for me and believe me,

it's exciting for our students. Karen.

>> As I mentioned before, at the center of the readtopia,

our lessons and books that we had created.

They'll be familiar to some of you because some of them

come from the previous start to finish core curriculum.

There is a core book that is one of the gold start to finish books, and,

there's an Anchor-Read-Apply lesson with support for differentiation,

for each chapter in each of the books.

The lessons are intended to teach children how to comprehend text.

That's a really important distinction.

All too often, we are reading something and asking students to answer questions,

or it's very common for teachers to hand student a reading packet,

and they're reading in order to complete that packet.

There's not much evidence that suggests that helps students get better at reading.

It helps teachers know who are the children that can do it and can't do it.

But, it really is a test of students verbal problem-solving,

and more than their ability to read and understand.

In the anchor read apply lessons,

what we do is actually teach students to think about

how they have to think in order to maximize their comprehension while they're reading.

Once we're done with a lesson in each chapter,

then we go back and we check answers with the text,

that's sort of verification.

We're trying to get people away from the,

here's your list of questions read to answer those questions,

because students can actually get quite good at that and

not get any better at reading with comprehension.

We need to move them beyond that,

and the Anchor-Read-Apply lessons that are built into readtopia,

help students learn to

comprehend and improve their comprehension

so that when they pick up a new book in a new setting,

they can read it and understand.

Go to the next one. The books are available as paperback books,

traditional they look like chapter books.

This is an example of a page from the original book,

but we also have produced,

you can show the next slide,

we've produced each one of the books in an online version that

will have voice output and provide this much more graphic based interface.

Some teachers are reading it aloud,

other teachers are reading aloud

this version while they're just displaying it on the screen,

and still other students are listening to this version as it's displayed on the screen.

So there are a variety of different formats that the book can be accessed in.

Additionally, each one of these chapter books have

been re-authored into six levels of graphic novels.

Now, our thinking as we were creating

these graphic novels was that students would have a book in their hand,

that they could use for independent reading practice that related directly to

what they were learning through the teacher

directed Anchor-Read-Apply lessons with the main book.

We've provided teachers with placement tools to help them think

about which level is the right starting place for students.

But in my work in a classroom recently,

one of the things that I found is that the students were actually

quite eager to do more independent reading,

and so the teacher made it an option for them,

to read any and all of the graphic novels that was at their level or lower.

So students who had never had a lot of success before in independent silent reading

were having a great deal of success with independent reading of these texts.

The sixth level, you can see on the screen right here,

there are three levels.

Level 1 is designed for students who are not reading at all yet,

and in fact, our emergent communicators.

Meaning, they might still be developing some unintentional or symbolic communication.

The level 1s are absolutely intended to be used in

a shared reading context where a reading partner,

it might be a peer or an adult,

is supporting the student in helping them build interaction and engagement skills,

while they're interacting around a text.

Level 2 which has slightly longer sentences on the screen,

and would offer a slightly higher level of syntax and variety of vocabulary.

At the level 2, we're targeting students who

are beginning communicators but are still not readers.

At level 3, it's students who are functional communicators,

and basic sight word readers.

So you can see at these early levels of reading,

there is an important interplay between

your ability to initiate and communicate and interact,

and your ability to actually read the words.

If you're going to be successful at moving forward in reading with comprehension,

it isn't just the ability to answer from a choice array that's important.

It's the ability to actually actively construct understandings from that text,

and that requires some ability to communicate and

interact with people while you're engaged in that reading.

As we move forward,

you can see that as we get to level 4,

we start seeing more indifferent text on the page.

The level 3 had sentences that repeated the same grammar or syntax,

one after another in order to support students.

You can see that, I live up in the mountains.

I live there with my brother.

I live there with my father and mother.

So there's more texts,

but it's highly supportive and repetitive texts.

We get to level 4 and each one of the sentences is intentionally,

have a different structure.

These are students who are beginning independent readers and proficient communicators.

They can talk to us and ask us about what they're reading.

By the time we get to level 5,

these are students who are reading text,

it might be hoping they may still be struggling with comprehension, but they're reading.

By the time we get to level 6,

we've got students who are fluent readers.

They're still fairly beginning level, maybe first,

second grade readers with comprehension,

but they're able to read text and understand that.

Above that, our expectation is students would be spending their independent reading time

rereading the chapters in

the chapter books that have been used to instructionally with the class.

In addition to those chapter books

and the graphic novels that align with the chapter books,

each of the unit has these different text types.

These text types are the specific way that we're trying to

encourage what our current standards talk about as close reading.

The difference between reading and just comprehending,

and reading in order to study or in order to get information from a text.

Both of them are important, but they're different.

The way that we deal with many of these different text types like reading a map,

when we read a map,

we're reading it in order to get

some specific information about how to get from point A to point B.

That's different from reading fantastic facts which is

much more about trying to build some fact-based information about the world.

They require different things to attend to in that text,

and require students to hold

different kinds of information in their head while they're reading.

These text types are all available in four different levels.

If Don shows the next one,

you can see what they look like at these four different levels.

This is a timeline,

in the upper left corner is the beginning level timeline.

It has very few words,

the words that are there are start year 1, year 2,

as opposed to trying to get these beginner communicators and

emergent readers and writers understanding

this concept of time going back all the way to May 1804,

and so building some simple sequencing,

and understanding how things change over time.

As you look from level 1 to level 4,

you can see that these documents have a very similar look and feel.

In fact, level 3 and 4 to your average student ,

I'd say 2, 3 and 4 don't look very different.

But when you carefully look at the words in that level of information that's there,

you see that the complexity increases

both in the amount of information and the way that it's written about.

You can go to the next one.

An important feature of these text comprehension lessons of

the information text is a feature that we call on the back activities.

We've given them that name for

the very specific purpose of trying to get teachers to think about,

literally producing the task on the back of the page where the text is on the other side.

What we are trying to get is create

the necessity for students to look at the front and find the information they need,

and hold that in their head,

while they flip over to the back of the paper

in order to do something with that information.

All too often, what happens is teachers will place the two pieces of paper,

and we see students locate the information in the text,

and put their finger next to it,

and then copy that information in order to answer the question.

That's not helping students get the skills that they

need in order to become readers who can comprehend.

Over the level 1 through level 4,

the complexity of the task,

and then amount of information that students have to hold in

their head in order to turn over and complete that task, increases.

But, this on the back,

you should hold that in your head to help you remember,

that literally, we do not want students having the text and the text side by side.

We want them to have to turn it over,

hold that information in their head,

and then do something with it,

and that's what the questions and activities on the back of the page are for.

Next one.

So I mentioned before that we have

a commitment to continuing to build

foundational skills for students all the way through their school career.

Once you read with comprehension at fairly high levels,

you are acquiring massive amounts of new vocabulary by reading every day.

We want to make sure that the students who are

participating in Readtopia are given the opportunity to

build the word reading skills that are required for them to leave school with

the same self-teaching mechanism that

the rest of us have when we leave school as fluent readers.

phonics and word study program appears at two different levels.

One level you'll be quite familiar with and it is a standard making words.

The lessons that are in Readtopia walk

students all the way through doing making words so that they

have opportunities to learn the 37 most common rhymes or

spelling patterns in written English and how to

use those rhymes to read and spell other words.

Those making words lessons,

we provide teachers with the support that they need to include

the students who are still emerging in their understandings

and might still be learning letter names and letter sounds,

and how to have those students be a part of the group

that's working on the making words lessons with

different instructional goals but engaged in

the same activity as their peers who are doing making words.

You can go to the next one, Don.

In addition to making words,

there are word study lessons that are helping

students learn how to use morphemes or prefixes,

suffixes, and routes in order to read and spell words with two or more syllables.

The Readtopia includes some supports for teachers to

determine which students need to be in which word study instruction.

We offer lessons that meet the full range of students who we're targeting in Readtopia.

Don mentioned previously that there's a big emphasis on vocabulary and that

we introduce vocabulary through the videos.

But we also support vocabulary in a number of ways.

Each word is encountered multiple times across all of the units,

and you can see here we have fairly traditional vocabulary cards and supports.

In a classroom that I was in,

the teacher had used these vocabulary support as

the basis of a really cool bulletin board that she

made and that students were building on across the unit as they

learned about different things related to the topic that they were studying.

More than once, I've referenced some of the assessment

or placement tools that are built into Readtopia.

There is a simple teacher facing tool,

so in other words, you don't sit down with students and administer any assessment.

The teachers are guided through

some heuristic yes-no questions in

order to help make some decisions about starting places for level,

for both the graphic novel and the information tax.

The thing that we've been trying to help people think through

is it's simply a starting place placement tool,

you'll then often need to look at what that matches

by putting that level book into students hands and seeing what they can do with it.

I find that if anything,

we're going lower than that when we're actually sitting down and working with students.

Often times we talk about the placement tool being the goal for the end of the unit.

As we're starting a unit,

and students are lacking in background knowledge and

vocabulary and all of the content is new,

they might start at lower levels with the text.

By the time we're done with the month-long unit,

and they've built a great deal of background knowledge,

familiarity with the vocabulary,

that then they're moving up within a month-long unit or a six-week unit,

depending on your setting, to higher levels.

In the chapter books,

there are these clause assessments at multiple levels so that students who are

beginning readers and writers can

be assessed more about their content knowledge through listening.

So what did they learn about the book?

While students who are readers are getting

assessed on their independent ability to comprehend that text using the clause.

We can monitor student's performance during

the apply step in the anchor read apply lessons.

We can monitor their performance using the on the back activities.

There are end of book assessments in order that teachers can use to assess students.

We have just recently been building a tool to help teachers be

even more data driven in the decisions they make about where to

start students and what to focus on in the phonics and word study lessons.

You can go to the next one.

As a package,

this entire Readtopia package

is likely pretty different than what you've experienced before.

It really is everything and it is

a reading English language arts curriculum that

addresses critical content in the area of social studies and science.

It is building students critical knowledge of the world.

Our authors who work on this project are ensuring that every bit of

information that is shared throughout the unit is

factual so that we're teaching students accurate information.

We're being very thoughtful about doing that in a way that maximizes

its accessibility to the full range of

students with severe disabilities that are in our public schools.

Trying to make sure that there is a place for those students

who are still working on the most basic level of communication,

and interaction, and attention, and engagement.

But that we're also building it in a way that those students who can read,

who are able to pick up a book and read it and talk about it on

some surface level way are getting the instruction they need so that

they develop the skills to be able to read with comprehension in the kinds

of these complex ways that we're trying to teach

all students to read with comprehension over time.

Go ahead, Dawn.

It meets these new alternate assessment

expectations while respecting students and teachers.

That notion of respect for students and teachers is really important to us.

We have tried to move beyond the notion of age appropriate and get to age respectful.

We want to respect the interests.

We want to respect the life that our students bring to each learning opportunity.

We also want to be building on that,

we want to be connecting what they know to what it is we're trying to teach them.

Over time, we are building the kinds of skills

that are assessed now on alternate assessments across the country that

aligned directly to the College

and Career Readiness Standards that have been adopted in most states in the US.

Go ahead, Dawn. In terms of scope,

we have conceptualized Readtopia as

a comprehensive ELA program that teachers will be using in classrooms for up to 90,

and I actually say 90,

to 120 minutes a day.

In classrooms where I have been,

where I'm seeing students,

I say, leaning in.

They are engaged in a way that teachers are trying to figure out where to eke

out time as opposed to having to use reinforcers and,

visual schedules, and all kinds of other tools in order to

convince students to do what it is they're being asked to do.

For a long time, I've said as literacy teachers,

our goal is not to use strategies to make kids do what we want them to do,

but to make our instruction interesting and engaging enough that they want to do it.

I feel really strongly that we've accomplished that with Readtopia.

I see students who previously had visual task displays,

and they were doing two simple tasks,

and then they needed a break to go do something else,

who now are engaging for extended periods of time.

I'm seeing students who were only answering

questions often times with limited choice arrays,

who are now using their augmentative communication devices to talk

in fairly sophisticated ways about the content that's being discussed.

This fall I saw a very skilled teacher get a group of students,

some of whom had autism,

some of whom used augmentative communication and she

had them turn and talk to each other about a topic.

Then when they shared back out,

they had to share their partner's point of view.

It was just this beautiful way of helping

students who oftentimes struggle with things like theory of mind.

The young man who uses AAC is pretty good at expressing his own ideas,

but really struggles to use his device to

talk about other people's topics and other people's ideas.

Watching him in that lesson,

and watching him be so interested in being

a part of the group and the content that they were studying,

that he was willing to go through the effort that

it took not just to remember what his peer said,

but to figure out how he could report that back to

the group using the vocabulary that he had available to him on his AAC device.

In most classrooms, we're thinking that we're 90-120 minutes a day,

and you will just be finishing one unit in 4-6 weeks at that pace.

If you have a larger range of students with more complex multiple disabilities,

it's going to take you longer than that, meaning it will take you,

at 90 minutes a day,

it might take you eight weeks to get through.

In other settings, we see lots of students who are now getting assessed to

Readtopia that might have some reading tutoring that might be resource room.

Or in many of our classrooms,

serving students with the most complex needs.

They don't have 90 minutes a day of instruction.

Literally, the time is just eaten up by personal care,

and therapy, and all of the other things that happen.

We want to be make sure people understand that you can use Readtopia bit by bit.

So 30 minutes a day or one lesson a day through that cycle.

Now it might be at that pace that you spend a whole semester on one unit,

but you would have this really cohesive set of

learning experiences and activities that you did across the semester,

that by the time you were finished,

you could feel pretty good about where students were and what they were thinking.

Again, our recommendation is that this is

a comprehensive approach that's going to be 90-120 minutes today.

Some of the classrooms where we send,

teachers are finding that time by drawing on either their social studies or science time,

depending on what's emphasized in the unit that they're working on.

But it's not impossible to envision using Readtopia in smaller bits of time.

It just is going to be a slower page for you to work through each of the unit.

>> Basically what I think makes Readtopia powerful

is that we really are relying on an experiential model.

We're giving kids experiences that really allow them in to tie into the curriculum.

For those that have been using it and those that are going to use it,

we say, let's begin the adventure.

We also noticed that students loved the fact that they're going on

adventure with these books and with this whole experience.

We'd like to open it up to questions.

>> Becky, we need your help with questions because we're not seeing them.

>> Yeah. I'm not seeing them.

>> Okay. Just let me. I'm going to.

>> I think one of the things that's important to know is

that each unit has roughly 55 lessons.

So it's pretty extensive.

As Karen said, you can use one a day.

Although we recommend like three or four lessons a

day and that's where you're going to see the most gain.

>> Are you able to see them now, Karen?

I changed your status to an organizer.

>> I'm not seeing them. Do we have any?

>> Yes. There is a couple.

I am interested in using this with a group of adults and we meet only twice a month.

I'm wondering if I could purchase only one unit.

>> Don, [OVERLAPPING] who's the appropriate person for Anne to contact

at Don Johnston to get more information about that?

>> You could call Tori or Linda at our organization.

>> Next question. [NOISE] I can see them now, Becky.

>> Okay, perfect.

>> The next question is about students accessing this with an iPad or other resources.

The books are available as download in PDF

and they're accessible PDF so anywhere that you could read a PDF,

you could have access to those books.

It is not intended as a software-driven instructional program.

Teachers access resources online and you certainly could then

distribute in the way teachers use Google Drive and other resources now.

You could distribute the print materials as

electronic materials using whatever tools that you already have.

For example, I mentioned Google Drive,

is the way that I've been seeing teachers use it.

All of the questions about cost and those types of things,

I'm going to direct you to

DonJohnston.com/Readtopia and you can find that specific information there.

>> I think it's for one year,

it's roughly $550 and most people

were buying multiple years and multiple classrooms which the price changes.

What you need to do is go on our website or call our office and get a price quote.

[OVERLAPPING] The other resource we have,

we have a unit that we have a half of a Chicago unit.

You can go in and see.

Because of the webinar,

I'm not able to show you any videos,

but if you go online to our Readtopia site,

you will be able to see an example of the videos.

There's roughly four or five videos per unit,

and that would also give you an idea of what the books look like,

what the audiobooks are like,

and that'll give you a better sample of what comes with Readtopia.

>> The next question is about the books.

The books are integrated with each one of

the unit so you get the reading materials that come with the unit.

The second part of the question is,

are the units the same each year or do they differ?

At this point, there are nine units available for use.

There are two more that are coming very soon

and we're on a pace to release a new unit each month.

We provide guidance for people to think about

which units are middle school and which units are high school.

Certainly at high school level,

any of them are appropriate,

but at middle school,

there's some unit like Romeo and Juliet

that wouldn't be appropriate for any middle school.

The idea is not that students would be revisiting the same unit each year,

but they're within a school system,

their or school, there would be some shared agreement.

Again, we've provided some guidance around which were the units that would be used during

the grade span and to prevent the idea that year after year,

students would encounter the same unit.

I will say that I can imagine that a student might have

the Civil War unit in seventh grade where it's pretty

typical that students in general don't study civil war,

but that you might revisit it again in

high school because it typically comes back up again.

If students are using Readtopia throughout that grade span,

when they got to see it again in high school,

it would be a very different experience for them.

They would be reading at a different level,

they would have a very different level of background knowledge that they bring to it,

and so several years apart with lots of other experienced in between,

I'm not very concerned if a school district

would decide that we're going to cycle back to this.

In fact, I think that would be very much like

the experience that students without disability

have when our curriculum spiraled and we revisit topics at later points,

we just revisit it in more complex,

in-depth ways and Readtopia would support that.

>> Yeah, let me correct one thing that you said, Karen.

We're on pace to do a new unit every two months. [OVERLAPPING]

>> Okay, sorry

>> You said it

>> Yeah, instead of every month.

>> Increase our anxiety back home.

When we start a unit,

we start with videos and so right now,

last week we were filming up in Northern BC called the wild.

We were doing dog sled filming.

You probably won't see that unit for

another year and a half because it takes roughly a year and a half for us

to put all the things that we need into it to come up with a complete unit.

>> Don, there's I request that you go back to the slide with

the iceberg because people would like to capture the quote that's on there.

>> Okay.

>> There is a question about producing curriculum for grades one through six.

We are having conversations but no promises there.

Do you want to say more about that, Don?

>> Yeah, I think when we first started,

we said we're going to be all about junior high and high school and that was

the content that was specific for that age group.

I think what we've seen is that several people have said,

we want to try this in younger groups.

We have a fourth, fifth grade,

one of our prototype classrooms was

fourth-fifth and they had incredible success with that.

A lot of it depends upon the subject area.

We think we could bring this down to

probably a third grade level with the same format that we're using right now.

There's things like Journey to the Center of the Earth in Chicago

and Twenty Thousand Leagues Under

the Sea that are completely appropriate for that group of students.

We see it coming down to

roughly a third grade level and so when we pick the future titles,

we're trying to weigh in.

Because we have a lot on the high school area,

we're trying to weigh the new titles that were coming

out for next year on that more third [inaudible 00:51:46]

I'm trying to think of some of the titles.

Black Beauty, Anna of Green Gables,

that will be appropriate for those younger students.

>> There are a series of questions about

students with autism who are non-verbally non-reading.

I've just give a few brief ideas about that.

I wanted a specific questions is around matching.

In general, I would avoid that.

It what students can match.

There's not much that they get from continuing to match more complex things.

But instead, I would be thinking about within the making words lessons,

that it's much less about actually making

the words and more about finding the letters that are needed to make the words.

Given overdue steps.

Students, you might ask them for the C to make the word cat and they give you,

I don't know, an F and you would simply be providing feedback based on that.

Oh, that's the F. It would make fat not cat and then put that F away and wait.

It's not a mastery-based approach,

it's not an approach of they have to get that C In order for you to move forward.

As long as you can get them to make any choice,

you can teach from whatever the choice that they are.

What the making words lessons will provide you is the repetition

with a variety that's much more likely to keep them engaged over time.

You're not sticking with one lesson until they can choose those letters.

Each day there was a different set of letters and

some different words that you're making.

I'm using air quotes here.

You're making the words.

They're helping you find some of the letters for those words.

I can understand if your whole class is full of students who are non-verbal, non reading,

and have autism that actually,

the reading, listening part,

and the apply task might be challenging.

I would consider doing the anchor activity because it's going

to build on everyday experiences that they're having.

Then I would think about reading the chapter in more of

a shared reading format where you're trying to

get them to communicate and interact with you.

If your students don't currently have

a comprehensive system that they're learning to use to communicate.

I would point you to one of our other research projects called Project Core.

You can get that on the website at project hasten core.com.

You will find a wide variety of instructional supports and

resources that could add to the instruction that is built

into Readtopia in order to support

those students in having access to vocabulary that would

allow them to initiate and interact as opposed to just responding or answering questions.

A question that's come up about that anchor read apply that I keep mentioning.

Anchor read applies a particular approach that

Don Johnston and I have been working on for years and

it's an embedded in a couple of

previous research studies we've done as well as products that have come out.

The idea is that rather than simply

building new background knowledge each time students have to read

we are systematically anchoring

the lesson in some everyday concrete experience that they've had.

For example, an anchor read apply less in around sequencing events.

During the anchor step,

we might ask students to turn to

their visual schedule and think about the sequence of activities that we do every day.

To help students understand that they know something about sequencing,

they know something about putting things in order.

Many of the students who need that most are

the same ones who are very dependent on their scheduled, they understand order.

They just don't know how to apply it then when it comes

time to read and think about the events in a story.

Doing anchor step, we're activating the way of thinking,

doing some activity that's directly related to their everyday life.

Then setting a clear purpose that it asks them to apply

that way of thinking to the chapter that we're going to be reading.

Then the apply activity is a pretty quick check-in that allows the teacher

to assess how well students are reading or listening for the purpose that has been set.

Some nice evidence in our work that shows that we have

students who are truly getting better at core comprehension skills.

Not just getting better at finding answers to

questions by looking back at or reading a text.

>> Yeah. In relationship to that,

learning is based upon what you already know.

What anchor read apply does is,

trigger those things that a student already knows and builds on that.

It's really laying a foundation for

building methodically and it's based upon brain science.

>> I think, we've addressed the question.

Does anybody have any others to add?

>> Okay, great. I want to thank Karen and I want

to thank Becky from Closing the Gap for hosting this with us.

Feel free to contact our website @donjohnston.com

and you'll see a button there that will take you to our Readtopia pages.

There's a lot of videos of classrooms that are using it in there.

I think we just put,

or are soon to put a series of videos that we were

just shooting in a school that has been using Readtopia for a couple years now.

You'll get an idea of what it's like, what it looks like,

and get a sense of these students be engaged in that learning process.

I want to thank everybody and good luck.

>> All right, thank you so much, Don and Karen.

Again, if anyone has questions,

you can reach out to Don Johnston on their website.

Also, John from Don Johnston posted some links

and a number you can reach if you have any additional questions.

Thank you so much for joining us today.

>> Okay. Thank you.