



the Spalding NEWS

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Spalding Education
INTERNATIONAL

Gilbert Benjamin Franklin Charter A Spalding Accredited School



Benjamin Franklin Charter School, Gilbert Campus.

Benjamin Franklin Charter School (Gilbert Campus) became a Spalding Accredited School on April 22nd, 2008 in a lovely outdoor ceremony. One of four Benjamin Franklin Charter Schools, it is the second to receive Spalding Accreditation.

SEI President Warren North presented the accreditation plaque to Principal Terry Nicoll at the special "Free to Choose" event on the school grounds.

K-6 grade level choirs, directed by Kerwin Blau, gave stirring performances of both classical and popular music. Community enthusiasm and support were demonstrated

by the more than 600 proud parents and staff in attendance.

Currently serving nearly 500 students, the Gilbert campus opened in 1997 and has consistently scored in the top 10% of all Arizona schools on state and national exams.

Although the accreditation application was first filed in 2002, staff turnover (bane of all principals) resulted in the loss of an SCTI and Spalding Certified Teachers, delaying accreditation until this year. Gilbert Benjamin Franklin once again has a Certified Spalding Teacher at all

(Continued on p. 5)

Reading to Write

How reading and writing are linked is the theme of a book by Francine Prose* entitled *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and For Those Who Want to Write Them*.¹

Although it is true that not many teachers are budding authors, many are book lovers. Prose points out that *part of a reader's job is to find out why certain writers endure*. Substitute teacher for reader and you have a reason for reading this book.

Words, words, words

Much like Spalding begins with the sounds that make up words, Prose starts with the words that make up books. In the first chapter, she emphasizes the importance of word choice, selecting just the right word for the precise shade of meaning the writer wants to convey.

...As I wrote, I discovered that writing, like reading, was done one word at a time, one punctuation mark at a time. It required what a friend calls 'putting every word on trial for its life': changing an adjective, cutting a phrase, removing a comma, and putting the comma back in.

When trying to impress upon students the need for editing and revisions, it might help if they knew that even professional writers find it necessary.

What writers know is that ultimately, we learn to write by practice, hard work, by repeated trial and error, success and failure, and from the books we admire.

Prose recommends *close reading* which she defines as reading carefully, deliberately, and slowly. She points out that we all begin as close readers, proceeding word by word until we get beyond practicing the skills of reading to reading for what the printed page can tell us.

Close reading increases readers' pleasure because it enlarges understanding of what

the writer is up to.

Prose provides excerpts from exemplary writers and explains what can be gleaned about the author's intentions from that kind of reading.

From words to sentences

From words she moves to sentences. The qualities to be prized above all others, she says, are *clarity and economy*. To remove even one word would make the sentence less lucid; and there are no unnecessary appendages to distract the reader.

The well-made sentence transcends time and genre. A beautiful sentence is a beautiful sentence, regardless of when it was written, or whether it appears in a play or a magazine article.

Anyone who has read David McCullough's books would add history and biography to the list. To make her point, she provides sentences from Raymond Chandler, James Joyce and Samuel Johnson, authors widely separated by centuries, genre, gender, background and temperament.

To the question *what is a beautiful sentence*, she admits that beauty in a sentence as in a painting is difficult to quantify but adds, *if you are even thinking in these terms—that is if you are even considering what might constitute strong, vigorous, energetic and clear sentences—you are already far in advance of wherever you were before you were conscious of the sentence as something deserving our deep respect and enraptured attention.*

With a teacher's guidance, the same will be true of students.

On to paragraphs

Moving from sentences to paragraphs she quotes advice from author Isaac Babel.

The breaking up into paragraphs and the punctuation have to be done



properly but only for the effect on the reader. A set of dead rules is no good. A new paragraph is a wonderful thing. It lets you quietly change the rhythm, and it can be like a flash of lightning that shows the same landscape from a different perspective.

She illustrates with an excerpt from Babel's *Crossing into Poland*.

The Spalding News

In 1986, Romalda B. Spalding established the Spalding Education Foundation (now Spalding Education International, or SEI) to perpetuate her Method, and to maintain the principles and procedures which have made The Spalding Method so effective.

Through ongoing professional development, SEI provides the highest quality literacy instruction to public, private and home educators, and ultimately to all students. Today, SEI trains teachers and accredits schools in *The Spalding Method*, which continues to be validated by current research about the way children learn.

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The Commander of the VI Division reported: Novograd-Volynsk was taken at dawn today. The Staff has left Krapivno, and our baggage train was spread out in a noisy rearguard over the highroad from Brest to Warsaw built by Nicholas 1 upon the bones of peasants.

Fields flowered around us, crimson with poppies; a noontide breeze played in the yellowing rye; on the horizon virginal buckwheat rose like the wall of a distant monastery ...The orange sun rolled down the sky like a lopped-off head, and mild light glowed from the cloud gorges. The standards of the sunset flew above our heads. Into the cool of the evening dripped the smell of yesterday's blood, of slaughtered horses.

She points out that the first paragraph is straightforward, unadorned narration, a reportorial reference to a victory. There are no adjectives in the sentence, and only one, noisy, appears in the paragraph. However, the last line lifts us from the realm of the newspaper report, in which no such phrase is likely to appear, into that of fiction.

You'll have to read the book to find out what she says about the second paragraph.

Now to Narratives

In the chapter on narration, she demonstrates the many possibilities of narrative writing with more excerpts. Determining the narrator's identity and personality, is only the first step.

What really matters is what happens after that—the language the writer uses to interest and engage us in the vision and the version of events that we know as fiction.

Chapters on character, dialogue, details, and other topics follow, concluding with one entitled "Books to be read immediately." Now that's a summer reading list!

Importance of literature

William Faulkner's famous 1950 lecture described the purpose of literature.²

Man is immortal, Faulkner said,

not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past.

The teacher's duty could be aptly described as guiding students to read the best that has been written because they cannot be fully educated without having done so.

Added incentive

Another reason to read Prose's book is not directly mentioned by the author, but from a teacher's perspective, it may be the most important one.

In addition to reading for models of good writing and acquiring perspectives on the human condition, reading provides context students would not otherwise have. Reading serious fiction and non-fiction provides broad, general knowledge, which as E. D. Hirsch has repeatedly written, is the key to general academic achievement because it is the key to comprehension.

Researchers Anne E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich³ would agree.

Children who read well, are likely to read more. Hence the importance of getting children off to an early, successful start in reading... Furthermore, the very act of reading can help children compensate for modest levels of cognitive ability by building their vocabulary and general knowledge.

We should provide all children, regardless of their achievement levels, with as many reading experiences as possible. Indeed, this becomes doubly imperative for precisely those children whose verbal abilities are most in need of bolstering, for it is the very act of reading that can build those capacities. An encouraging message for teachers

of low-achieving students is implicit here. We often despair of changing our students' abilities, but there is at least one partially malleable habit that will develop abilities --- reading.

In other words, teaching children to read fluently and broadly is the gift that keeps on giving.

Improving comprehension

Clearly, Spalding-taught students have an advantage because they learn to read early in their academic careers. However, taking time for reading well-written books guided by a well-read teacher is just as important. Through such books, students acquire the vocabulary and general knowledge they need to extend their comprehension, and, as Mrs. Spalding always emphasized, develop the desire to keep reading.

A National Endowment for the Arts report⁴ supports the connection between reading and writing, the central thesis of the Prose book. The report found a correlation between students' reading patterns and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing test scores. Anecdotally, writing instructors have long witnessed the inspiration, stylistic lessons, and vocabulary growth that the best student-writers derive from authors they read on their own initiative.

Finally, learning to read like a writer illuminates understanding and has the power to inform teaching, making students the ultimate beneficiaries. ☆

1. *Reading Like A Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and For Those Who Want to Write Them* by Francine Prose, HarperCollins, 2006.
2. Speech at the Nobel Banquet at the City Hall in Stockholm, December 10, 1950 http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1949/faulkner-speech.html
3. "What Reading Does for the Mind," Cunningham and Stanovich, *American Educator*, Spring/Summer 1998.
4. *To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence*, National Endowment for the Arts, November 2007

*Francine Prose is the author of 14 books of fiction. She is a distinguished teacher, critic, and essayist.

Dynamic Duo: NY Reading Reform & Spalding

For many years the Reading Reform Foundation of New York has been a lonely island of scientific reading instruction in a sea of look-say and whole language. Reading Reform has been exporting effective reading instruction to New York City schools for more than 3 decades. On February 4, 2008, *The Journal News* publicized one school's success story and correctly attributed it to Reading Reform and *The Spalding Method*.

Sandra Priest Rose, Treasurer, Chairman, and motivational force behind the non-profit literacy organization explained, "When you make English logical, kids love it. This is the beginning of an intellectual approach for these children." *The Journal News* article elaborated on how that comes about, "Reading Reform staff go to schools at the invitation of the principal and visit throughout the year to provide coaching."

According to Grimes Principal Frances Lightsey, "Having the Reading Reform program in the school has made a significant difference. This is an opportunity for teachers to become truly masterful at what they do." Ellen Elkamp, a second-grade teacher undergoing her first year of training provided a teacher's perspective: "I

already see how this program helps. This method gives the students the tools they need to read."

The foundation charges schools a fraction of its operating costs- roughly 20%- and raises funds for the rest. Proof of the program's success is in students' reading levels. Principal Lightsey cited school data showing that "...children in the first-grade class are reading at a second or third grade level... the other classes have similar results.." Spalding is taught in 25 inner-city classrooms in New York City plus 4 classrooms in the Grimes School in Mount Vernon, New York, for a total of 29 classrooms.

Sandra Priest Rose often receives appreciative letters from teachers Reading Reform has trained. Teacher Maureen Doyle recently wrote: "You and your friends in the Reading Reform have made a great difference to many. ... Parents who see me on the street nowadays tell me what a difference it made in spelling, reading, writing for their now young adult children. You and your ladies have done so much, have labored with love. Thank you."

As Rose pointed out in a 2007 interview with Michael F. Shaughnessy, Senior Columnist for EdNews.org, "Our demo-

cratic ideal demands that we teach all children in ways that do not demean them by asking them to guess at words when reading or spelling them. Students of all parts of the economic spectrum deserve to be asked to be accurate in pronunciation, speaking and reading, and in spelling, because they have been given all the information they need with which to do this, and to reason things out."

Guided by this belief, Reading Reform Foundation has weathered the political and pedagogical storms that periodically roil New York City's educational waters. As the grateful comments above reveal, the teachers and students who have benefited are exceedingly grateful that it has. ★



Sandra Priest Rose, New York Reading Reform

Letter of Appreciation and Donation Appreciated

Many of the teachers who were originally certified by Mrs. Spalding have now retired, but as this letter to SEI President Warren North indicates, Spalding has not faded from memory or affection.

The letter, shown here, is from Doris L. Wilson who was certified by Mrs. Spalding in 1986.

The contribution accompanying her letter comes at a crucial time. Funding the ASU research study (see the last issue of *Spalding News*) was not in SEI's financial plan but necessary to meet NCLB requirements.

Dear Warren,
My heart belongs to Spalding ever since I discovered its power to strengthen reading, writing and spelling abilities in children and adults.
Thank you for giving me this opportunity to help. I never miss an opportunity to sing of the wonders of Spalding.
As I write, memories of my beloved Spalding teacher, Mary Gunn, fill my mind.
My best wishes to you and to all there at S.E.I.
Doris L. Wilson

Year 1 (2006-2007) study results demonstrated that over 500 Spalding kindergartners out-performed matched control children on every subtest. The Mid-Year 2 results (2007-2008) show Spalding first graders significantly ahead of controls on every subtest. We are now requesting help to fund year 3.

Tax-deductible donations enable us to continue documenting the efficacy of *The Spalding Method*, protect its future, and the future of generations to come. Mrs. Wilson's letter reminds us of the power of Spalding to change lives. ★

Gilbert Benjamin Franklin Charter

(Continued from page 1)


New from Spalding
Decodable Readers
Now in Production



Principal Terry Nicoll and SEI President Warren J. North holding the accreditation plaque.

six grade levels and fourth grade teacher Vickey Roa is the SCTI.

We are delighted to report that Principal Terry Nicoll will complete his SCTI certification in 2008, making him the second SCTI at the school.

Principal Nicoll's certification is significant. An article in the Spring issue of *Education Next* entitled "Going for the Gold," explains why. The author asks why students at some schools succeed academically while others at schools with similar populations do not.

The Bridgespan Group, a nonprofit organization, examined the differences between schools that excel and those that do not.

According to their findings, the difference that set schools apart "is the effort expended on the day-to-day leadership and management challenges."

Succinctly put, what matters most and what receives priority attention at such schools is student performance. "Leaders

must be willing to make choices about what matters most and then 'sweat the details' in aligning resources and effort behind those choices."

Professional development begins before teachers ever enter the classrooms, and once started, "it never really stops." The study found that a strong teacher-coaching staff, a major investment in time and money, pays off in student achievement.

Any resemblance to Spalding's accreditation process is not coincidental!

The importance of a school leader who understands the value of both initial training and on-going professional development and coaching cannot be over-emphasized. Spalding Professional Development, the path to Spalding Accreditation, provides all three.

Congratulations to Principal Terry Nicoll and his dedicated staff.

Imagine, decodable readers specifically written for kindergarten children to practice the Spalding phonograms!

Well, imagine no more. A set of 8 readers is now in production to be released in time for the 2008-09 school year.

These handsomely-illustrated readers are designed for use in conjunction with the *Spalding Kindergarten Teacher Guide*. (The next edition of the Guide will be revised to include the decodable titles.)

The readers will be introduced at weekly intervals, beginning with week 8, and will incorporate the phonograms taught that week along with those already taught. The complete set will include 8 narratives, 8 informatives, and 4 informative-narratives. They will be sold individually and as a set.

Spalding teachers have requested decodable readers aligned to the sequential introduction of the phonograms. In addition to providing meaningful practice for students, the readers are important because they will help to spread *The Spalding Method*.

Text book selection committees at both state and local levels have often cited the lack of early-grade readers as a reason for not adopting Spalding.

Developing such readers has always been SEI's dream. We are delighted to announce that the dream will soon be a reality. Please check the Spalding on-line store in September (www.spalding.org) for ordering information.

Donna Schaffer: A Tribute Upon Retirement

Long time Spalding Teacher Instructor Donna Schaffer retired this year after 27 years as teacher, and principal of the Franklin Northeast Elementary School and Franklin West in Mesa, AZ.* Donna was one of the original teachers certified by Mrs. Spalding in 1986.

She received many accolades from both parents and staff at the retirement party held at the school she has served so well.

Marc Mason, Franklin Schools founder, shared memories of Donna's long association with Franklin. He made special mention of her devotion to students and of her leadership abilities. Also lauded were her dedication and skillful teaching of *The Spalding Method*.

"She was superb in the classroom," he said. "Her caring for students, her knowledge and dedication to our program created a desire to spread her influence beyond a single classroom." All of these led to broader responsibilities at Franklin.

He joked that Donna is the only person he knows who can "talk longer about Franklin than I could!" Marc summed up her many attributes using the letters of her name in his tribute.

D--edicated to what she believes.

O--ptimistic that a solution to every problem can be found.

N--ever gives up on students.

N--atural teacher from the inside out.

A--stute in discerning the needs and doing what is best for students."

Her contributions to Spalding Education International received high praise from SEI President Warren North who, with Dr. Mary North, were there to honor Donna.

He recounted how, in addition to teaching courses, Donna has faithfully served on the Curriculum Development Committee since its inception in 1998.

She aided in the revision of *The Writing Road to Reading* and the Spalding 1 (now ILA 1) course completed after 5 years of



The picture held by Donna Schaffer was taken in 2004 and shows the first 5 "Spalding Pioneers" with bookends awarded by SEI for 15 years of continuous service. SEI President Warren North appears with Donna.

intense work in 2003. She also assisted in the transformation of Spalding 2 to ILA 2 and the creation of the K-6 *Spalding Teacher Guides* and other products to assist Spalding teachers.

Always eager to improve her skills, Donna enrolled in and graduated from the new *Effective Spalding Coaching* course in 2007.

SEI is very pleased that her retirement from the Mesa District does not mean retirement from SEI.

We look forward to continuing our long and rewarding association with Donna for many years to come.

*Carrying on the family tradition, daughter Emily replaces Donna as principal at Franklin West. ★



A Nation Still At Risk

In April, 2008, the US Department of Education released a report entitled *A Nation Accountable: Twenty-Five Years After a Nation At Risk*.

The report makes a good case, with facts to back it up, for the urgent need to improve schools and increase student achievement. Cited are National Assessment of Educational Progress results, international data, graduation rates, and more.

Being a government publication, it is to be expected that some administration "horn tooting" would be included. However, that does not diminish the value of the information or the extent of the problem.

SEI has excerpted the Executive Summary. The full report is available at <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/accountable/>

(Continued on page 8)



Q I can't seem to find any examples of how to mark past tense words. I'm assuming I underline the phonogram *ed* and place either a 2 or 3? Also . . . I'm still having trouble with telling the difference between unvoiced and voiced consonants. For instance, the *p* in the word *jumped* seems to be voiced, yet this is not the case. Is the *ay* in the word *played* even considered a consonant? I notice that it does end in the /d/ sound when in the past tense. In the word *dance* is the end voice or unvoiced? I'm assuming it's supposed to be voiced because when put in the past tense it makes a /t/ sound. Any suggestions for helping me understand voiced/unvoiced consonants.

A Marking past tense verbs: See WRTR 219 *graded, loved, wrecked*. A few other examples are found on the following pages: 2nd sound 301 (*died*), 320 (*carried*), 324 (*remained*); 3rd sound: 293 (*tripped*), 297 (*fixed*), 324 (*noticed*).

Voiced, unvoiced sounds: Reread the description under Consonant on pages 46-47 and the explanations for the phonograms listed on pages 213-214. For example, for a voiced consonant sound, air is built behind the lips before the sound is released from the mouth (*b, d*).

Unvoiced consonant sounds are also made by letting air build behind the lips, but only air is released from the mouth (*p, t*). In *jump*, the /p/ is unvoiced. The sounds of the past tense are /j/ /u/ /m/ /t/. The *p* is silent and the *t* is unvoiced. In the word *played*, the sounds are /p/ (unvoiced) /l/ /ā/ (saying the second (long) sound of *a*) /d/ (voiced). In *dance* the *n* is voiced, *c* is unvoiced, *e* is silent

job 3 (WRTR 45). In *danced, ed* says /t/ (unvoiced).

Q Why are numbers nouns? Why is rule 4 not applied to the word *I* since *I* is the end of a syllable? Is there any reason why the whole phonogram *wor* is not underlined, but only the *or* when we refer to *wor* as the *wor* of *works*?

A Numbers may be nouns or adjectives. They are nouns when the number is used in place of a thing, and adjectives when they tell how many. *Five* (adjective) *pencils are on the desk*. *One* (noun) *was broken*. R. 4 refers to *a, e, o* and *u* at the end of a syllable. R. 5 says that *i* may say /i/ at the end of a syllable. We underline /er/ because the *w* just shows when *or* can say /er/.

Q How do I indicate to the pupil which sound they are to be thinking of when I say *sb*, but want them to write *ci, ti, or si*. I have a similar issue with the five *er*'s except for *wor* of course.

A In a Written Phonogram Review (WPR), you say the sound /sh/, then the child/children say the sound /sh/, then you clarify. For *ci* you say "short." For *ti* say "tall." For *si* no clue word is needed because it has two sounds.

Q My class has a question about rule 24. It seems that in some words (like *memory, memorize, and*

apology, apologize) the *y* isn't actually replaced by an *i* before adding a vowel ending. Does the rule just mean that the word is written with an *i* when adding any kind of ending?

A *The Writing Road to Reading* text states r. 24 on page 225. The rule says, "When adding an ending to a word that ends with a consonant and *y*, use *i* instead of *y* unless the ending is *ing*." When writing a rule 24 word such as *memorize* or *apologize*, the student needs to keep in mind that the base words *memory* and *apology* ended with a consonant and a *y*. Because endings have been added to the base words, the spelling of the derived words *memorize* and *apologize* is then explained by r. 24.

Q What is the reason for underlining the *y* in *my* but not in *baby*? Pages 44-45 explain the reasons for underlines, but none answers my question.

A On page 45, the first reason for underlining is, "A vowel is underlined at the end of a syllable when it says /ā/, /ē/, /ī/, /ō/, /ū/." Please note the third example which is *July*. Both *u* and *y* are underlined because the *u* says its second (long) sound. The *y* says the second (long) sound of *i*. That also explains why the *y* in *by* is underlined. In *baby*, the *y* says the first rather than the second sound of *i*. ☆

Editors Note:

In keeping with Literacy Watch, which examines the importance of word choice, your editor turned to another book entitled (surprise, surprise) Words. Here are a few from the author's collection to stymie your students or use when playing Balderdash, an hilarious game of dueling definitions.*



- "Batrachivorous" Frog-eating (You may never eat frogs' legs again.)
- "Bletting" Spotted appearance of very ripe fruit.
- "Cockle" Heart shaped Valentine candy with a message.
- "Oligophagous" Eating only a limited number of specific foods. (Try that one on the fussy eater in your family.)
- "Antapology" Reply to an apology ("That's OK" after being bumped.)
- "Ozostomia" Bad breath
- "Pilcrow" Name of the paragraph symbol
- "Mease" 500 herring
- "Cachinnation" Excessive laughter (Try that on the gigglers in your class.)

*Words by Paul Dickson, Delacorte Press/New York, 1982

A Nation Still At Risk (Continued from page 6)

Executive Summary

“In 1983, Swatch introduced its first watch, Microsoft Word was released, and Michael Jackson’s Thriller video hit the airwaves. We also learned that our supposedly world-class system of education was not keeping pace with the progress of other nations.

“That same year, the landmark U.S. Department of Education report, *A Nation at Risk*, found that about 13 percent of 17-year-olds were functionally illiterate, SAT scores were dropping, and students needed an increased array of remedial courses in college. Such trends threatened both our children’s opportunities and our collective future.

“Twenty-five years later, it’s time to review the progress we have made since the report’s release. We remain a nation at risk but are also now a nation informed, a nation accountable, and a nation that

recognizes there is much work to be done.

- If we were 'at risk' in 1983, we are at even greater risk now. The rising demands of our global economy, together with demographic shifts, require that we educate more students to higher levels than ever before. Yet, our education system is not keeping pace with these growing demands.
- Of 20 children born in 1983, six did not graduate from high school on time in 2001. Of the 14 who did, 10 started college that fall, but only five earned a bachelor’s degree by spring 2007.
- Fortunately, thanks to the recent standards and accountability movement and the No Child Left Behind Act, we are finally taking an honest, comprehensive look at our schools. For the first time in our

country’s history, we have reliable data to evaluate student performance and address weaknesses in our schools.

- We must leverage this information to achieve better results. We simply cannot return to the 'ostrich approach' and stick our heads in the sand while grave problems threaten our education system, our civic society, and our economic prosperity. We must consider structural reforms that go well beyond current efforts, as today’s students require a better education than ever before to be successful.

“We know which areas need the most attention. Now we must dedicate ourselves to making sure they get it.

“Twenty-five years after *A Nation at Risk*, can we expect more of our education system? Shouldn’t we?” ☆



Spalding Education

INTERNATIONAL

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Take The Writing Road
to Reading success