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J o u r n a l  
1-63

Unfiltered Adult Literacy

Introduction

On July 28, 2023, I began working with an inmate that self-identified as not being able to read or write. Given he had "passed" (supposedly) the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) screening for dyslexia and was placed in a class to obtain his G.E.D, the obvious questions include:

1. Who read him the questions on the dyslexia screening exam?
2. If the questions were not read to him, how was he able to pass the exam?
3. Why is illiteracy (very profound in this case) not identified in a dyslexia screening?

The answers to these questions are easily (and sadly resolved) by merely observing an administration of dyslexia screening in the BOP. The process is less than complete and dramatically designed to NOT identify any inmate with dyslexia. The fact that a profoundly illiterate inmate can pass a dyslexia exam that is exclusively written questions is no surprise given the reality of how the process is administered.

It is not hyperbole to suggest that if a can of fruit happened to show up at a BOP dyslexia screening, the can would be found to not be dyslexic, and unless the label (on the can) confirmed a high school diploma, the fruit would be given a space in a BOP class for completing the G.E.D. With such a landscape, it is no shock that an inmate that cannot read or spell the words math, science, social studies, and reading language arts would be in a G.E.D. class. In this case, the inmate made his illiteracy known.

What follows is my work with this inmate.

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Is it any different than teaching a politician to think?

As I sat with him yesterday, he smelled like a wet burlap bag. He shook like my Grandpa. Each word he spoke seemed like a doubtful guess, and when my eyes considered his absurdly tattooed fingers (what the heck does it mean to spell L-O-V-E on your digits sans thumb?). My main thought was disgust for this old ignorant junkie fool - walking refuse from the Appalachian hills, compliments of the Bluegrass State, that is now in the daycare of the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons - the largest assisted living facility operator in America.

He did not quit. Each time I asked him to read the lines again, he did. As he would mangle or miss a word, I made a note of where greater review might be necessary. At this level of literacy instruction, everything requires some review; I am dealing with a man in his 60s who cannot read or write. The goal is to facilitate the formation of neuro pathways in a human brain that has been damaged, destroyed, and neglected for decades. Uniquely for folks of this ilk, he stays at it, and comments, "you are getting me further than I've ever been." The prospect that what he said is true (since all inmates constantly lie about everything) is all the more sad; this is our second session, and our total time working together is less than 60 minutes.

After we completed the second reading of "The Letter Hunt," we turned to reviewing the words that presented greater challenge. He watched as I printed and slowly spoke each word. Then, on a separate piece of paper, I asked him to take my pen and duplicate the words, I had written, while I slowly spoke each word. By the end, he had witnessed and participated in ~~a~~ the duplicate process of writing words and hearing them.

If literacy has a chance with someone like this inmate, it has to be one-on-one; he mastered group failure decades ago. Teaching must incorporate auditory (hearing), visual (reading), and tactile (writing words), and sessions must be short enough to avoid intellectual exhaustion (it happens very quickly in the earliest stages of learning). The student has to feel that the time with the teacher concludes leaving more to be done and ample desire to continue work. With that orientation, the student moves from the literacy classroom into a much bigger, much more important, classroom: the world in which they live (even if that is a prison).

The student that has not been exhausted walks out of the class and keeps learning. While the literacy student that has been exhausted will think "mission accomplished" as they stumble to their abode for junk food, porn, and drugs; they are tired, feel they deserve a reward for such exhaustion, and want their mind "in Park" (no differ from leaving a demanding college lecture and heading for the closest bar). Conversely, the unexhausted walks about noticing words and reading things that they thought were beyond them a day ago; it may be no more than a sign instructing proper hand washing, but they are still in a learning mode. Neuro pathways are being built; there may be a chance functional literacy will follow.

He is still not quitting. Next, an announcement is made that our class is over.

He takes both the piece of paper, where I wrote the words, and the paper where he copied words and puts them in his pocket. I ask him to keep writing, those words, on those same pieces of paper as many times as he can (to fill both papers). He gives me a blank stare, and I ask him if he has a pencil. His blank stare goes to one that communicates (without words) "what would I do with a pencil - you know I cannot write," but he speaks a different message and says he "can find one." Once again, I am reminded that there are two-legged adults creatures that exist for much of their miserable lives not writing (much less reading) anything. This guy has probably had no need for a pencil in prison before my request.

We will see if he shows up (much less returns with the papers) today. Folks like him quit all the time....

Is this any different than when, as a lobbyist, I had to teach politicians to think?

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"If there is no strain, there is no strength." Oswald Chambers

There is no difference

He did show up and he brought the two pieces of paper which comprised his homework for the previous day. Going to the classroom made no sense given nothing would happen in that particular room unless I was there, so he was wandering the hall looking for me.

The sheet of paper where I had written the words had been untouched - as if it was some textbook where marking it would be against the rules. The paper where he had written the initial set of words was filled, front and back. Such an accomplishment was not overly celebrated <sup>was</sup> acknowledged. Getting any inmate student, much less anyone in America today, to comply with such simple requests is not the norm, so we spoke of the value of doing such work and the progress accomplished by merely <sup>finish</sup> doing the assignment.

The three channel <sup>(auditory, visual, tactile)</sup> approach to literacy is not an unspoken strategy. I have explained this <sup>to him,</sup> from the start; he has been told that any meaningful learning only happens by doing all three things. In fact without making the commentary specific to him, we talk about how stupid it is to think you can learn to read without employing all three. Sitting quietly and listening will not cut it; you might as well not bother; a passive student is an uncured idiot. There must be active listening, speaking words as they are read, and writing words down. To do it any other way simply will not work, and he has sat through enough unsuccessful literacy sessions, in other prisons, to understand this point of view.

Learning to read cannot be done silently. You must read out loud. I do not know if this is an absolute axiom (I doubt it is), but it is presented to him as gospel. He knows that he cannot merely nod his head to communicate understanding; he has to use his voice. I tell him that President Abraham Lincoln NEVER read in another way than out loud; the historical fact matters not; the narrative validates what we are doing today.

We also talk about neuro pathways. This is how the brain functions. They are the things that let someone read. They have to be built and are only constructed with repeating things over and over. All of that "stupid" repetition that some students and teachers dispise just confirms what IDIOTS they are and how they wasted his time in the past. All this "you understand this and now it is time to move on" is a lie - a lie told to him that was part of the reason he is an old guy who cannot read. We do not blame society or bad teachers; this guy's lack of literacy is his own fault, and that is never dodged. However, I am ready to help him fix himself (if he is ready).

I explain that "teachers do not teach a damn thing" when it comes to reading and writing. This is a process of him and his brain, and I am merely there to help guide <sup>the</sup> process that requires daily work.

Before beginning to re-read the same book we have been reading for the previous two classes, I mention intellectual exhaustion. Our class time together is not the completion of the day's learning; it is just a warm-up. He must walk out of our room and begin to notice words and letters as well as complete whatever assignment might be homework. Homework can not drive the learning outside of the classroom; it is only a tool to keep him in learning mode.

Now back to reading "The Letter Hunt."

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He keeps showing up ....

This made our fourth meeting, and he appears again. Some might think that an inmate assigned to be in a class at a particular time and showing up, where there are clear sanctions for failure to attend, would be the normal state of affairs. Only those uninvolved in prison education would think so.

In the most restrictive settings, not including the current venue, robust attendance can be enforced, but then, only the body can be forced into the classroom. The mind never has to attend a class; the mind never has a mandatory class; those responsible for learning activities forget this constantly.

For the purposes of this situation, the inmate is showing up in body and, <sup>in mind</sup> ~~with some strong indication~~, <sup>with</sup> ~~in~~ (whatever mental capabilities exist.) He is here, ready to comply, and ready to try (or at least act like he is trying).

There is no shift in my visceral reaction to this student. My earlier comments continue to reflect my feelings. The endstate of literacy remains doubtful, but we have mutually agreed on his personal goal: to be reading western novels by Christmas.

Because this inmate has a lifetime of failed learning experiences, his exposure to the alphabet and the phonetic sounds of letters and letter combinations is something he generally understands. Still, that general understanding was never imbedded in his brain to where letter sequences, when viewed, brought specific sounds to mind. If asked to "sound-out" a letter, he might be familiar with the direction, but only because he had heard it, as a meaningless utterance, from teachers before.

We will get to some point where "Drill And Kill" phonics will be part of the session, and those sessions are soon. He will never progress until he can approximate the sound of a word where he has no idea what it means. For now, the remainder of this week, we will be building confidence that he can read using one simple book and sentences he should have already memorized by now.

Our first task is to review the words he had been copying multiple times. Different from the first time this exercise was assigned, I merely wrote the words out while he watched, and I slowly pronounced each word. Then, I handed him a blank piece of paper for him to use for the copying assignment.

My failure to have him copy my words on to his blank piece of paper before we ended the session had consequences. It would seem normal for one to think that a pattern had been established in the first assignment that could be followed, and that would be true, if the exact steps had been duplicated.

Because I did not watch and work with him as he copied the words I wrote, "afraid" became <sup>"afraid"</sup> "afraid" and "suggested" became "sussted." This was not a single time error. For the entire assignment, "afraid" and "sussted" were written multiple times. He precisely copied his initial mistake and never referenced back to the template. The fact that "afraid" and "sussted" are not vocabulary words for this assignment and have little phonemic similarity to the words assigned is yet another matter.

We may have built some confidence, but for this guy, reading is still some wierd guessing game where letter combinations have no requirement to make sense. This is all the more obvious when we begin to use flash cards where he guesses the answer is "exclaimed" when the word shown to him is "illustrated," and that is only one example.

This will be the second day where, in addition to the book and flash cards of words from the book, we consider a single, un-realted, sentence from current events of the day. It is one more attempt to build confidence and show how words attach to his real world. We are not close yet, but he is not quitting.

The session ends with the standard "word copying" homework with one additional twist: bring me a single word you found in the world around you - like a word from a TV headline. We will see...

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Class Five ...

It appears to have become a routine. He is standing in the hall patiently waiting with the shakes that only come from Parkinson's or years of self-abuse. I have no idea which, and my interest is none, but tremors remain an ailment I secretly personally fear and thank God that I have yet to experience.

When we reach our classroom, I ask for his homework assignment. His efforts confirm no additional bizarre new words (e.g. afrid and sussted of earlier in the week). When I ask if he "got around" to identifying a single word he noticed since we last met (from television or a print source), he admitted to having not completed that project. I will make the same request at the end of this session.

The meeting was shorter than others as prison facility security protocols had delayed the start of our class. Nothing was new to him. We read the same book; I read it to him as he followed the printed words, we reviewed flash cards with words from the book, read the two current events sentences of previous classes, he read the book, and I presented him with a new list of words to be copied before next meeting. Not a single task is accomplished at a level of mastery, but it would be hard to not see progress.

Notwithstanding the multiple repetitions, he is memorizing nothing. Is this because he has no ability to memorize? Zero ability might be an overstatement; he does make it to the Education Department each day. Still, each time he looks at a sentence, there is a sense that he is seeing the words for the first time.

As we <sup>come</sup> continue to his words he has trouble or cannot identify <sup>words</sup> (that he has seen before), we start adding phonemic tools. The word "illustrated" is a periodic stumbling block, and independently, he does not identify "I-L-L" (the first three letters of the word) as a sound he knows. So, I see what he can recognize. I write the name "Bill." He recognizes it at once. The same is true for "will" and "kill", so I risk asking if he can recognize the word I write next, "ill," and he does. We go back to the word "illustrated" and show how he now has a tool to figure out the first sound in that word or others he might not recognize.

The exercise involving the word "illustrated" allows me to pre-sell the phonics work that will come next week. One of the reasons adult literacy fails, in this setting, is that inmates zone out when they are exposed to phonics lessons (especially when they are DVDs designed for pre-schoolers); my goal is to have shown him the purpose (if his memory is strong enough to recall this conversation next week).

His reading is improved, but below the capabilities of my first child, at age three, when she had been presented similar material a similar number of times. No doubt she had/and still has vastly more brain cells. Still, I am never able to compare him to anyone else; that would be unfair, and no one is like him.

On to tomorrow...

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The World News ....

"The World News" was <sup>his</sup> proud announcement as he pointed to the words on his <sup>home work</sup> paper. Compared to the rest of his work, those written words did not look like his handwriting, but celebrating the completion of the assignment was my focus - not over the top - just acknowledgment that he was staying on track. *He had found words, written them down, & brought them back to class.* As I <sup>reviewed</sup> the words he had copied, there was nothing to note, but we <sup>with great care.</sup> review the work together. No one is prone to do anything without a level of validation, and unless I validate his efforts, no one else will. They are pitifully minor, but they are more than he was doing before.

I wonder what the guy does all day. Does he sit in his housing unit, shaking, and staring off into space. He is responsive to questions and seems capable of conversation, but how he occupies his time is unclear to me.

It might be natural to want to know a student better, but that is, in my opinion, garbage when it comes to details other than how they interact with me. I know he is from Kentucky which gives me a point of reference for certain learning points (I asked that when we first met), but other details are not important. In this setting, certain inmates' past activities in prison or nature of conviction can impact how they are treated and accepted by other inmates. Such structure can be helpful in a housing unit or other settings where inmates are en masse, but have no utility in my work with him. I do not need to know about his background; I need to stay focused on our work; I am not his friend or therapist.

We go back to the previous work of my handmade flash cards, sentences "from the real world", and reading the same book we have used since our first meeting (exactly a week ago). We progress through these tasks, and I decide to add another sentence from one of my favorite magazines.

My sentence selection was not totally on accident. It contains a proper name that I hope can teach a point. We talk about how that particular name might be pronounced most any way, but a good starting point for a new reader is to compare similar words. Since the proper name was "Farage", it might be a good guess (I explained) that it would be pronounced like a similar word "garage" with swapping out the first letter sound. Somehow, this seemed to make the sentence more important to him, and copying that sentence was added to his assignment for the weekend.

We discussed how we were at the end of this week, and on Monday, we might read this book one final time and then, if he is ready, move on to a new book. His reading of the initial book is still less than perfect. Some words (that he has now seen and read dozens of times) still stump him, but it is time to expand his exposure to print and intensify his phonemic awareness.

I ask him if he wants to take the book we are reading back to his housing unit for more study. I mention how this might be good or might be something he is not interested in doing since it is so obviously a book for small children. I make it clear there is nothing to be embarrassed about, but even saying that is ridiculous. Of course it is humiliating for an old man to be carrying around a children's book. Beyond the embarrassment regarding literacy, (in prison) there are countless other creepy implications. He asks me what do I think, and I agree focusing on written assignments is best for now.

We will see what next week brings.....

Reflecting on the first six classes ...

Have we accomplished anything? Of course, we have. The fact that he has attended every scheduled class meeting is a rather meaningful accomplishment in this environment. Further given the countless reasons for schedules in a correctional facility to be disrupted, it is significant that it has been possible to have six consecutive classes (with a weekend break between class one and class two).

The question as to whether any advancement in literacy has been accomplished is more nuanced. He is reading the book at a faster rate (when class six is compared to class one). He is following and generally completing his out-of-class assignments.

Is it all "clicking" somewhere inside of his head? I doubt it. Knowing when that happens seems obscure. But, he keeps showing up.

How can the same word, in the same sentence, be confusing to him? In one of the "real world" sentences we practice, the word "actors" appears twice; he is usually able to identify (or read) the word when it appears in the first part of the sentence, but he seems stumped when it appears at the end. It is as if his brain is exhausted by the time the sentence is nearing conclusion.

How can he continue to say "workers" when the word is "writers?" As with the previous question, the most obvious answer is that he is guessing. For him, this is not a process; it is a guessing game.

Sounding out the words is something he seems to be trying to apply, and that is the reason why more time focusing on phonics may make sense, but at a certain point, even phonics can become a mindless guessing game. *for a student that cannot focus.*

Reflecting on my early reading experiences, following along while a teacher reads a book or a paragraph seemed impactful. I am unsure if this could work in his case. I constantly think he is not fully/mentally present. He is not a much "zone out" or "thinking about other things;" I wonder if he is thinking at all. Am I dealing with such a level of brain damage that these strategies cannot work?

It is too early to say he cannot learn, and I believe such <sup>a</sup> statements <sup>is</sup> are, in fact, a lie; *everyone can learn; some quit trying.*

I do know what it is like to try to advance learning and not move forward; my oldest son has been four years old (from a learning perspective) for the last 23 years, *but that is not a reason to quit.*

Preparing for class seven ...

Do I continue to repeat what we are doing, adding nothing more, until mastery? No. Somehow, the critical role of repetition needs to be sustained while some new material is added.

The disdain for "drill and kill" is a reflection of teachers with short attention spans and no patience for what the learning process requires. Given so many teachers speak against "drill and kill" or do not use it (the same passive aggressive morons that preach against "teaching to the test"), and the fact that it works, you must readily assume these "education professionals/union members" got into teaching to fail. Being failures was probably already part of their psyche, so they sought to fail in a place no one notices (very often). Bad cooks are rarely outed by the starving, and inept teachers escape exposure in most classroom filled with the desperately ignorant... *inmates are just that.*

We will continue "drill and kill," otherwise he has no chance of breaking through his "successful" decades of not learning how to read. To make that path a little less numbing to the spirit (necessary but numbing nonetheless), additional activities will be added.

In adding activities, I have decided to extend the learning period until the final moment when inmates are called to move back to their housing units and add more opportunities for him to write. This class is the last daily activity in the Education Department (before the afternoon closure), so the announcement of "Recall" can be the signal to stop. The supporting materials are limited (it is not as if I have to store a bunch of lab equipment); they can be placed in a folder and quickly returned to my files in the library.

On Sunday while moving the classroom of a member of the Education Department staff (a federal employee), I came across, to be discarded, materials that can help expand the lessons. These materials will allow me to <sup>increase</sup> expand the number of sight words, work on sentence structure, re-enforce phonics, and allow him to practice his handwriting. In the typical inmate literacy class, these would be self paced materials, probably poor photocopies from a workbook, and be given to students "to keep them busy" (don't they know that "busy hands are happy hands" - nothing is mentioned about busy hands learning anything). Such an approach is as traditional as it is a waste of paper.

In this case, the student will be using the <sup>materials</sup> notebook in class, under constant supervision, and with on the spot correction. I will ~~continue to~~ be a "helicopter teacher."

Being a "helicopter teacher" may seem impractical and absurd, but I strongly suggest it is a path that can help accomplish success, other strategies using self-paced approaches fail, and we are already in the world of the impractical and absurd. I am ~~trying to~~ teach a man how to read that is already eligible for Social Security, is a convicted felon with absolutely no private sector employment prospects, has spent and will continue to spend his life in and out of prison, and who has failed to learn how to read while participating in various literacy programs with educators far beyond my qualifications or experience.

Ridiculous tasks sometimes require ridiculous approaches. I think this will work because a "helicopter teacher" with the right attitude and attention becomes the one person in the room invested in the students success. Students never do much to please themselves, but they often will try to please the source of gifts they appreciate. I am already giving him the gift of attention, so maybe he will try.....



So a class was cancelled...

It was bound to happen. In a facility operated by the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) any inmate schedule is an aspirational document. The fact that this particular class session met for 6 consecutive meetings, following a published schedule, was unique. Given the reason for the cancellation, yesterday, was a tornado warning, a class today is likely.

The question for me is: How to posture a cancelled class?

1. Saying the class cancellation is "no big deal" is ridiculous if I seek to sustain and grow the student's emotional investment in this particular learning experience.
2. Making a class cancellation some type of "existential threat" to the learning experience (even though it can be) would not be necessarily be dismissed. In fact, this is the precise moment where, in other settings, is where the inmate/student decides, "they do not care, and there is no way I am going to learn anything anyway."  
*cancelling classes destroys learning,*
3. Another typical, but equally unhelpful, approach is to simply make the next class twice as burdensome. This approach will embed in the student's mind that after a cancelled class, the next class will have the punishment of extra work.

So, there must be a cross-walk of these messages and more. My script will be:

- A. I was personally disappointed that the class was canceled.
- B. We are not going to allow a BOP decision, on a schedule, stop us from this important learning path.
- C. We are not "just fine" or "terrible behind" because of the cancellation, but it was a missed opportunity and now we must get back at it.

Yes, it will be a script. Some might think that is over done (I will memorize it, not read it - but it will be a script no less). Those with such an opinion are ignoring the fact that unless I address this issue <sup>with a definite tone,</sup> the student is certain to create their own narrative that is some combination of 1. and 2. (above), and the creative narrative will not be motivational or helpful; it will be a narrative that makes <sup>an</sup> acceptable move <sup>to</sup> on the default action of every inmate: quitting whatever is difficult, while blaming anyone other than self.

While not making the class harder (what that exactly means, I am uncertain, but it will relate to not dramatically pushing student performance beyond the intensity of previous classes), I do want <sup>to</sup> the class <sup>to</sup> as structured to efficiently catch up. No extra drama - just a little more focus.

We will see...

14 August 2023

At best, it appears my next class with him will be on Wednesday (16 August 2023). We will be approaching a two week break since our last class.

The question is no longer whether to acknowledge the lapse in consecutive classes but whether we should start at the same place we left off or back track a bit. While either might be an acceptable strategy, I am considering something else: a jump ahead - way ahead. Maybe this student is not as dumb as he presents. Maybe he is capable of being much further on than I thought. Maybe he even knows more than he is willing to admit himself.

Handing him a western novel and asking him to read the first paragraph is my instinct, but he might feel overwhelmed by the feel a of real adult book. While that is a fair consideration, my decision is "tough." I am not here to support self esteem in an elderly illiterate ward of the federal government. It is worth a try.

I am going to select a Western Novel without any great care. Most have a reasonable introductory paragraph in chapter one so it should not matter. The only criteria is that it will be a selection that would be a legitimate choice of a person who enjoys the genre.

This seems akin to throwing a non-swimmer in the middle of the lake, but in many instances, that approach works for those that have been failing in the "shallow end" for years.

We will see....

18 August 2023

Back in the saddle....

When our 7th session began on 17 August 2023, there had been a pause; session 6 had been on 4 August 2023. Given, his progress had been minimal, how much could he have forgotten?

The erasable board still had the notes I had prepared for class 7 when I thought it would quickly follow class 6. These literacy sessions were far from the only part of the Education Department that had been on pause.

He came with his homework. There was no mention of my request for him to continue to search for new words discovered during his day; something about that request does not resonate with him; I am going to build on the area where he is compliant; there is simply too much I do not know about why inmates refuse to follow clearly articulated request (assuming my articulation was clear). He is doing enough for me to build on that.

The written homework he presented showed his ability to copy a single sentence and certain selected words. The mistakes suggested that once made, they were copied. In the sentence to be copied, he did not start out spelling Britain incorrectly, but once he began spelling that word B-R-I-T-E-I-N, the flaw continued. From the beginning, he copied the word pull as P-O-L-L and never ceased. The fact that using poll in the sentence made the phrase ridiculous did not occur to him anymore than the lack of a major country having the name Britein. The connection between words and meaning his not strong.

He is working...much is left to be done.

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19 August 2023

Now I know for sure ...

"You are doing a helluva job with Ricky! He's a reading machine!" Of course, it was hyperbole; the tone was sincere, and the comment confirmed group appreciation of my work with this man and that he has an inmate community that will support his progress. It is time for, what some may call, the bad news...

He is a Cho-Mo. We call them Cho-Mos; it is a short hand for child molester, and the label is comprehensively applied to anyone who is, in fact a child molester, and anyone else that sits at the table for those with "Messed up (some use a word other than messed) Paperwork."

The surreal reality of inmate culture creates a distinction, a scarlet letter if you will, for anyone with a criminal conviction that classifies them as a sex offender. The same level of public shame is applied to those called rats. One might become a rat because the documents supporting their conviction and sentence show that they testified against another defendant (or cooperated in some way with the government). All of these nominal outcasts tend to stick together, help each other, and try to survive their sentence.

My observations, personal beliefs and experience make all of this stuff ridiculous. Some type of rank order among inmates reminds me of new Army Second Lieutenants trying to figure who, amongst them, is the most senior based on the date of their commissioning. When a trusted, very crusty, sergeant heard of this dispute, he, not so delicately, explained that "There aint no rank among Lieutenants! It would be like rank amongst whores!" The concept of "inmate rank" faces similar assessment.

Beyond the "rank amongst whores" argument, my opinion is that any inmate who accepted a plea agreement is a rat, and every inmate that possesses or tolerates pornography is a child molester. My opinion greatly expands the table for messed up paperwork. I think my definition is the mostly intellectually consistent, yet it is not shared by the majority. Given the nature of prison, and that I do not seek to be an agent of cultural change, it is simply a reality that my definition and the way prison operates are not the same. However, my perspective makes the man's status not relevant to me.

His status was not important before I knew, and it is not important now. The whole system is ridiculous, captures lots of absurdities, is quite unfair, and will not be changed anytime soon. Knowing is helpful on some macro level and will be used accordingly.

The irony is that his support network is likely to help him succeed far beyond that of the "good dudes." All inmates are hideously broken, most are irreparably ignorant, and few can help themselves much less any other living thing. Their families are better off without them. That makes them terrible sources of encouragement for someone trying to reverse a pattern of failure, but those called Cho-Mos have a better shot.

Our last class, number 8, included me begging him to make his entire environment place of word learning. I ran around the room, like a crazy person, pointing out words on maps and other wall hangings. The point was to look for language everywhere. Maybe he went back to his housing unit and did just that. Maybe that was the reason for the comment to me ...

"Miracle appear in the strangest of places..." Willie Nelson

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20 August 2023

Reflecting on classes 7 and 8 ....

The elements of each session now are crystalized into three parts:

1. Recognition of individual words
2. Writing/copying individual words and sentences
3. Reading individual sentences and books

The homework continues to be copying individual sentences and words, and the progress on this front is hard to discern. The copying is done mechanically; he is applying no context; he is copying letters in a certain order, but the fact those letters are part of a sentence, much less an individual word, is not, yet, a consideration for him.

He is low on confidence, but it seems to be growing. He will see a word and ask if he has identified it correctly; he never asks the question when he has mis-identified; he only ventures to ask when he is sure. We will need to increase his certainty.

Weekday sessions of less than 90 minutes, even without schedule disruptions, is not adequate to teach reading, but increasing class time is not the answer. The world has to become a non-reader's classroom. The student needs to get into a mindset of finding the words around him. This will shift learning from a 90 minute session to 90 minutes of supporting the learning that is happening during every waking hour.

How do you make an adult non-reader aware of language learning opportunities that abound in signs and postings? First, you have to get them to stop a habit they have mastered - refusing to learn.

Just like the foreign correspondent that spends decades in a country but never learns the native language, non-readers/the profoundly illiterate have given themselves permission to ignore a vital part of life; postings are meaningless; printed stuff with words are not important; the most important message in any sign comes with the shape or supporting graphic; they have accepted that they are very stupid, and that is okay; perhaps some idiot teachers shared the belief, the "some people are just not very good in certain things." For the fools that believe such tripe is true, they need to be kept from speaking to any child until they have learned to read, write, and complete math computations through algebra.

In this students case, the message of "words to learn are everywhere" requires a bit of performance art. At some point in the session, usually close to the conclusion, I run about the room expressing great excitement finding words the the student find familiar in various posted announcements, signs, and maps in the classroom. I have also added writing words on the eraseable board for him to copy. Somehow, seeing a word on an eraseable board makes a different impression compared to a word on a flash card or in a book.

The simple things still stump him. The cover of the western novel that I presented as his "Christmas goal" still befuddles him. He shows no ability to read the entire cover page. The novel has two authors with the same last name, yet when he comes to the second author, identifying that authors last name is not an easy task for him. Each word seems to be a new challenge, at times, even when he saw that exact word seconds ago.

We conclude class 9 with him reading the book we began reading in class 1 - the only book we have read so far. His performance is improving. Maybe memorization is starting. Still, he gets stuck. Context is no help. The pictures (that obviously support the text) do not seem to make it easier. Yet, he is better at class 9 than he was at class 1, and we celebrate that progress.

In any other prison setting, the instructor would have quit trying, and he would be quick to accept that learning was impossible. These one-on-one sessions are possible, there is time, and the approach is duplicatable, but inmate/staff simply are not willing to take this approach. I believe, the day he gets into a traditional classroom setting, even one for non-readers, the history of failure will return.

(13)

Class ~~10~~<sup>7</sup> awaits ....

There is the slight possibility that today will be the start of 10 consecutive classes (with the weekend pause) for the first time. Should that happen, it will be followed by the ridiculous concept of Labor Day in an inmate setting which creates that equally absurd three-day-weekend. Such concepts are lacking in utility in the setting, disrupt programming progress, and do not appear to be particularly advantageous to a unionized workforce (by definition, such a group works by contract).

Class nine was the first time I actively sought to make class activity cover the maximum possible period. Part of that is having an independent activity ready for the student where he can sit down, be given limited instructions, and start his work. This is a good warm-up for him.

Is independent work a good use of time that can be dedicated to interactive one-on-one instruction? Yes in this case. The student has no point of reference for independent learning. His inmate community seems to be supportive but also treats him like the retarded uncle that can do nothing for himself.

Time with me is an opportunity to practice (for moments) what he needs to be doing, to progress, when he is outside the classroom. That is why we point out random words on various postings and posters. That is why some independent work period is strategic in the process.

Independent work is necessary for the other reality for me or any other person in this setting. I cannot eliminate the need for me to respond to additional requests from BOP staff. They will understand that I am in the midst of an assignment, and that will minimize the time and attention they will demand, but they will not wait. Putting a one-on-one session on pause (while the student sits in a chair staring into space) reinforces existing negative conduct; this guy has mastered staring off into space.

(14)

23 August 2023

When this week began, my thought was that my literacy sessions might not be interrupted for ten consecutive session <sup>meetings</sup> (with a weekend break). I am trying to help a non-reading inmate learn how to read because it is a priority of the Education Department. That is not happening; there will be no ten consecutive sessions. The first two sessions were canceled based on various security protocols being invoked, and today's session, along with all other Education Department activities, has been canceled.

How can important strides in education be undermined when there is some mandate to provide such instruction? The answer of "Safety First" is always the justification that resists challenge.

In any setting where there is government control, the excuse of safety can over-ride any other rights, agenda, or activities. It is a foundational concept in our government. Alexander Hamilton, in making a case for the states ratifying the United States Constitution, clearly ~~how~~ <sup>how</sup> lined the position that a state's first responsibility is the security of itself (and its population), so there can be no constraints on the powers necessary to accomplish safety. I do not recall an intellectual challenge to the absurdity of this position.

The government can do anything to assure the safety of itself and its population is the rationale that allows city governments to avoid the bid process in certain procurements. It is also the foundation of the lockdown insanity enabled and extended by our White House under two Presidents. Why does no one recognize the obvious disconnect?

A government having all necessary powers to accomplish safety was not challenged, in the time of Hamilton, because the definition of safety seemed absolute. Safety meant, generally and specifically, protection from enemies, foreign and domestic. Even in that era, it was only an illusion of ~~share~~ <sup>shared</sup> agreement on a definition of safety. When the issue of "who has the power?" and "who can define when there is a threat to safety?" are examined, the absurdity (or danger of abuse) becomes more obvious.

Who has the unlimited power? The government  
When can this power be used? When there is a threat to safety  
Who gets to define a threat to safety? The government  
"What-happen-to the separation of powers?" does not have an obvious answer.  
~~Where is~~

Hamilton's justification seems to rest on the belief that threats to safety can take such varied forms that restrictions on powers to assure safety cannot be anticipated. He never seems to explain how citizens are protected from a government that abuses its power in defining safety. That level of ignorance was necessary to ratify a ridiculous constitution with no such limits.

This genie has been out of the bottle for some time, and the one group that is unwilling to limit these powers is the entity that has the powers.

If we seek a free country, who gets to define safety?

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25 August 2023 - Unfiltered Adult Literacy

I began this literacy assignment on a Friday, 28 July 2023, with sessions to be held every time the G.E.D classes met in the Education Department at FCI-Gilmer. As today was yet another day where G.E.D. classes were canceled, I state that, at best, on 28 August 2023, the tenth class meeting will take place. I cannot imagine there is a single educational protocol that can adequately compensate for such a disrupted schedule.

There are no performance measures for an Education Department in a facility operated by the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons. Certainly, there are administrative documentation requirements, but nothing that assesses success or failure based on a teacher/department delivering students that meet educational milestones.

Perhaps the excuse, for lack of performance measures, is that "a student must WANT to learn." While objectively true, teachers should not be getting off the hook when a student does not want to learn. Only the rarest students want to learn for themselves. Most want to learn to please a teacher or some other person. We do more for others than we ever do for ourselves, and teachers (after family members) are in the best position to create this desire. If a teacher reports that a student "does not want to learn," the response should be, "no one wants to learn, what are YOU doing to make them want to learn." Yes, you can force another person to want to do something; advertising does it all the time.

As a nation, we are fat and sick by choice, but those choices were not exercises of free will; they were orchestrated. The illiterate inmate is ignorant by choice, yet the ignorance was accomplished through teachers facilitating the desire NOT to learn. A desire to not learn confirms irresponsible teaching.

While my initial assignment, a man in his 60s from Kentucky, may have a unique history, the fact that there were some lazy teachers that facilitated this path is absolute.

Now, I have an additional assignment. More later...



He showed-up anyway....

Friday, 25 August 2023, was not a day for a literacy session. The Education Department had canceled all G.E.D. classes, and that includes teaching inmates how to read. My newest assignment, at 12:30pm, followed the announcement and did not show (i did not look for him). However notwithstanding classes being canceled (and it being a day of pleasant weather for the portion of the population that had access to recreation on that day), the library remained open. At 2pm, he was there; standing where I could notice him but saying nothing. He was waiting for me to speak to him; I wonder how long he would have waited; based on other observations, he might have waited, with his somewhat blank stare, for hours.

I asked him if our classroom was open, and he said yes. With this information, I gathered up all materials, and we moved to the classroom. The door was locked, but that was resolved with the help of an officer.

In the sessions the day before (both with him and the newly assigned inmate), a simple reality was made very clear to me. The fact that most non-reading inmates generally can recognize the alphabet and the sounds of individual letters does not necessarily translate into be able to read (or decode using phonics) three letter words. As with so much of a non-reader's existence, they have given themselves permission to ignore the relationships between various pieces of knowledge. How the sounds of each letter in the alphabet relates to reading was never considered.

Using flash cards with the 26 letters of the alphabet, I placed the cards, in alphabetical order, on one table. Then, I place 52 card pictures (2 pictures for each letter of the alphabet) on another table. My request for him was to take the picture (e.g., the picture of a bell) and put it on the card with the letter that represented the first letter of the word. The pictures were in random order and the pictures sharing the same letter were scattered throughout the collection.

As he engaged in this exercise and picked up a card, I would ask him what the picture was representing. When he responded correctly, I then asked him what was the first letter of that word. Once he had given the correct letter, it was then time to put the card on top of the appropriate letter (card) on the other table. Some pictures were harder to identify, and I would prompt him for the appropriate word. Once he had the word, I would then ask him for the first letter. Anytime he could not tell me the first letter, I put that card off to the side.

The cards were he could not identify the picture but was able to identify the first letter were:

- quilt
- volcano

Cards put to the side were:

- envelope (identified the picture but could not tell me the first letter correctly)
- alligator ( " )
- under ware (did not identify the picture and once told the picture could not tell me the first letter correctly)
- iguana ( " )

As he placed cards over the letters, a second challenge was presented. Once the letter was covered the picture represented that letter, so the second card could only be placed correctly by equating it to a picture rather than a letter itself (e.g. if a picture of a cat already was covering the letter C card, when he went to place the picture card for cow, he had to recall that cat began with C to find the appropriate place). This connection when without a problem for the pictures he identified on his own, but when I had to tell him what the picture represented (i.e. quilt and volcano) he could not find the appropriate place for the next picture of a word that began with Q or V.

This particular student can consider complex concepts. He knows the meaning of words like hydroponics and embargo, but the mystery of reading remains illusive.

28 August 2023

Preparing...

Today may be an opportunity to have both literacy sessions that are assigned to me.

12:30pm is with an inmate that, objectively, is destined to spend the rest of his life has a detriment to American society (or any other society that attempts to operate under any system of laws). Unless murdered, he is likely to live for another four decades, and the total cost for his incarceration for that period (Approximately \$1.6 million) would be vastly less than the damage he will bring to countless communities if freed. Our system makes it unlikely he will be incarcerated that entire time, so the negative economic impact is far beyond the cost to cage him and prevent him reproducing.

One of the things that makes this man a walking toxic waste dump is his failure to be literate. This man has been a tool of varying criminal enterprises, but in his undeveloped mind, he has seen himself as some level of independent agent. It seems to have never occurred to him that his inability to read the written word has made him a walking drone for others.

The man in in his late 30s and has been in various incarceration settings since being a teenager. He has mastered failing to learn how to read and is certain it is someone else fault. To some degree, he can find validation for that point of view, but such excuses are far from complete.

My task is to see if we can accomplish something different

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29 August 2023

They both showed up

My 12:30pm and 2pm literacy sessions took place yesterday. I cannot count on this becoming a trend, but it does help when schedules are followed.

12:30pm has not learned to read out of some combination of stubbornness and brokenness. He was born into a system that did not value his life or his education and could profit from his ignorance. He seems to seek to improve, but is not sure he can of if it is worth his time. Of the two, he seems the lesser brain damaged but definitely the most broken. With him, we must do everything one-on-one; if I do not care; he will not care; when I stop trying; he stops trying. Flash cards, writing words, and slowly reading, together, aloud will be how we fill the days. There is no baseline from the previous weeks of work that happened over a year ago not to mention other exposures to learning programs. It is as if he can hear things and ignore them; he sees things and ignores them; none of it, he believes, can change his life.

2pm is a different, but equally incomplete, picture. His progress can be recognized as we have now had more than 10 classes. Interestingly, my previous work with 12:30pm was never as consistent.

Other things are different when I compare the literacy work of this department prior to 28 July 2023.

1. None of it was one-on-one in a classroom with no other people.
2. None of it had a schedule of meeting every weekday

One-on-one and a private classroom might seem unreasonable in any institutional setting, but that is only if you consider this level of profound illiteracy common. It is not. A bit of scheduling and training of inmate tutors can allow this to happen. These cases are not rare, but just like a serious medical condition, there are ways to treat it. In fact, co-locating profound illiteracy (to be defined) as a serious medical condition might be an effective approach.

Illiteracy is more than a mere individual educational challenge; it is a physical and mental disorder that has vast dangerous societal consequences. We should treat it like the contagion it is; a fraction of the covid wasted resources would have, potentially, had extraordinary impact.

As a culture, prisons reject the concept of addressing illiteracy; it would confirm that inmates came from disgusting cesspools before incarceration. It was no surprise that an inmate, using a "I thought you should know" approach, initiated communication with me (I do not call such exchanges conversations - those I avoid with most inmates - most of the time) suggesting that 2pm was pretending to not know how to read and that "back at the unit" he had many books. The communicator was from a different race and regional background than 2pm and the absolute definition of pathological predator; it was almost amusing that the fool thought I would believe him.

2pm still struggles with "The Letter Hunt," but his performance is far beyond where it once was...the plodding continues.

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What is the point of teaching a sixty-year-old black inmate to read? So he can feel comfortable playing cards in a library.

It was prior to the covid drama when the staff member contacted me. She was a G.E.D. teacher in the Education Department, and I was an inmate assigned duties in the library with a work history of filling-in where needed. The assignment was to help an inmate that was "having a little trouble with his math work."

He was your typical older black inmate, born in 1962 (that means younger than me), overweight, and approaching the end of a multi-decade sentence. He still had more than five years to serve, and my hope was to help him get back on track with math.

Reviewing a math assignment that he had completed, the answers seemed to not relate in any way to the questions. While the problems with equations (numbers only) were rarely correct, the answers to simple word problems were totally bizarre. Without being sarcastic, I asked him if he was reading the word problems or just making up answers that he thought might make sense. He confirmed his response strategy was the latter. Then without, any great obfuscation, he confirmed he could not read.

This man had been in federal prisons and other incarceration settings for over 20 years. Not once was he identified as a non-reader. While the connection between illiteracy and recidivism/crime is as strong as crime and addiction, his case is not unique; it is, nonetheless, absurd, but that did not change the situation at hand.

The staff member was neither surprised nor unsurprised when I suggested that the inmate's math issue was actually a reading issue. Because I was willing to assist with the literacy instruction, my/our work began in learning how to read.

There is no rigid protocol on literacy instruction in the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and that is probably a good thing. By the time an illiterate human enters BOP custody, they have, most likely, been exposed to multiple reading programs and have embraced failure at every stage.

For reasons that I can not explain, this inmate was interested in learning how to read, applied himself, worked with me, and sought to take books to his housing unit to practice. Notwithstanding all of the disruptions that were part of the BOP's approach to covid, his progress was good, and soon he was no longer meeting with me. There was no formal conclusion of the sessions; they simply did not resume after an extended institutional lockdown for covid or some other incident.

Soon, he was visiting the library and asking me if I had any newspapers he could have to read. This was not a request for library materials; he was asking to have access to periodicals that were my personal subscriptions when I was finished with them. From that request and to this day, the man, who was self-identified as illiterate, now claims he can read, brags about it (in a quite way), and is always asking about another newspaper. I did notice that he is back in a traditional G.E.D. class, but I do not know if his progress is any better.

A couple of weeks ago, he asked me to help him fill out a fairly simple Social Security form. Based on my assistance, it was unclear if he understood a single word on that form, and when I asked him to sign his name, he turned the paper sideways and signed just as he did the day I first met him.

There us one change. He is more social in the library. He often comes by, asks for newspapers, and now brings a deck of cards so he can play poker with one of the other inmates ...

What I meant to say ....

My last session with 12:30pm was yesterday. There is a version of the theory that "a student must want to learn" that I cannot dispute. If a student refuses to cooperate, that is a version of refusing to learn that is difficult to overcome. That was what I faced yesterday.

12:30 is the responsibility of the newest officer in the Education Department (i.e. a different person than the one responsible for 2pm). In fact, the reason I took on 12:30 was that this officer recognized the limited clarity in the reading program she was intending to deploy (the Barton Reading System). To assure we were attempting some type of productive educational attempt with 12:30, and the fact I already had a program for 2pm, it was natural for me to be asked to step in. This officer did not merely "hand the inmate off," she sat in on a portion of the classes and sought ways to enhance the learning effort.

The day prior to what became my final session with 12:30, the officer had mentioned some DVDs that might compliment the current instruction. I agreed for multiple reasons. First, the past use of the DVDs had been using individual headsets and players; I strongly believe that there is something physiologically flawed in deploying content, using that mode, for a certain demographic that probably relates more to age; the younger they are, the worse it works; when a young person puts on a headset, the escape from whatever is supposed to be happening - including learning. In this case, the DVD would be played on a monitor in the room where we all would hear the audio and watch the presentation. This would allow my attention to the presentation to be a reinforcement of the students attention.

Another reason for bringing in the DVDs was the continued lack of phonemic awareness. The student knew the sounds at some level, but that did not translate into the automatic reaction that allows "successfully sounding out words;" other tactics to complement the existing efforts made sense.

The officer had told me she had found an introductory DVD, and I told her I would begin a standard (non-DVD) session and shift when she brought the tool to the assigned room.

As I began the day, it was clear 12:30 continued to be stuck at the most basic level. This is an inmate that has spent hours with headphones on (learning nothing or making no progress) and is only slowly moving forward with the current approach. When the officer arrived with the DVDs, my hope was that this would help jump start things.

The inmate was not pleased. Playing the DVD on the monitor would "put his business out there." He just wanted a personals DVD play and some head phones (so that he could continue the same failed path as before.

For this inmate to think that the entire prison community is ignorant of his literacy lack is silly. Every prison quickly identifies the weakness in every inmate, and all inmates know it. Mental weakness is no better hidden than physical weakness. This inmate knows that, but he likes lying to himself (apparently) and that may be one of the obstructions in his learning process.

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He looks about the same, same stare, same shakes, but perhaps, he is now combing his hair. His tongue continues to move about like a mental patient, but he can control it to speak.

I am starting to implement more of what I knew before about physiology and learning, but it felt like too much at the start. Besides, there was no need to invest too much in something that, statistically, is certain to fail, but there is a shift. He is still showing up; he is still trying; he is bringing back the homework assignments; we will keep at it.

For the second day in-a-row, we start the class as he walks in, I am waiting for him, and we being standing up. He come over to the table where I am waiting, he hands me his homework, and while still standing, we go through flash cards.

The cards are new to him. They are from another sight word program. A single word is on one side; a sentence with that single word is on the other side. The program has five levels; these are the cards for level one. Interestingly, Mr. 12:30 (before his session abruptly ended because of his refusal to watch a video being played from a monitor and not a personal DVD player with a headset) has attempted this same set of cards yesterday and became frustrated half-way through and was less than competent. This experience is different. There is more success than failure; there remain glaring gaps in phonemic awareness, but generally he does well.

To my mild surprise (but showing no reaction) and annoyance, Mr. 12:30 walks into the room and plops down in a chair. While this institution is nominally a Federal Correctional Institution (medium security prison) with controlled moves from place to place, and I am in the Education Department during a period where sign clearly state inmate wandering around are subject to disciplinary action, that matters little. Mr. 12:30 wanders around like the undomesticated beast he is; this inmate has been indulged his whole life, and I cannot expect federal employees to enforce simple rules that would support learning efforts. It is easier to ignore Mr. 12:30.

12:30 comes in and out of the room more than once, like a stray dog looking for a place to lay down, and each time, he seems to notice that this student is engaging in the same exercise he floundered with yesterday. Ultimately, he leaves and does not return.

After the flash cards, I had hoped to begin the video portion of the instruction, but the officer with the remote control and the DVD did not arrive. A written assignment is waiting, he moves to that as I locate the player and remote.

He is not finished with his written assignment by the time I have readied the DVD portion, but as he concludes we immediately start. This man is over 60 years old and he is sitting in a classroom with a video, designed for pre-schoolers, blaring and a window, where all walking by can note that this old guy cannot read. Those outside of prison might think this is not sensitive to his dignity, but that is absurd.

Preserving dignity is an idiotic concept in prison and subject to such bizarre interpretation that it is ridiculous to consider. First, all inmates know the weakness of other inmates. An inmate cannot keep it a secret, from other inmates, that he cannot read. Certain portions of the black population will play along with their illiterate homeboys, but it is a silly charade that no one believes. Second, protecting personal dignity is possibly one of the things that has kept this guy from learning how to read. Third, there is no dignity in illiteracy; any non-reading adult, that is not actively moving to fix that status, has absolutely no true sense of self, so there is nothing to damage.

In the case of this student, he knows he is in a bind and wants to change that. If it takes a few nursery rhymes, so be it. It is not embarrassing; it is necessary. By jumping into it that way, he is getting maximum benefit; there is a reason pre-school videos have a certain sound and approach and that is because it sticks in your brain. Maybe it is sticking in his....

2 September 2023

He showed up ....

I was not particularly concerned, but when he did not appear yesterday, my mental preparation for another failure by quitting had begun. In fact, yesterday had been another day where there had been an announcement that G.E.D. classes were canceled, but he has been reporting for our sessions regardless of such things.

When he walked into the class, I asked what had kept him from yesterday's session, and he referenced a medical appointment. My reply was that the staff assumed that was the case as he always attended regardless of G.E.D. class cancellations. I encouraged him to continue to do that. It remains his option, but showing appreciation may help encourage him.

The first part of our sessions are taking on the feel of a physical work-out as we move fast with the flash cards and missed words are done "again" and "again!" and "AGAIN!!" The voice I use is not particularly loud, but it is active and with the passion of urging an athlete to do one more push-up. We go from words and sentences using those words, to words alone, to using the erasable board for trouble spots.

The word PART was a trouble spot. I do not know why, but the word would not register with him. We stopped. I moved to the board and wrote ART; he identified that at the word art. Then I added the letter C to the front, and he saw that as cart. Fart was not something he automatically read, so we skipped to D and he read dart. That progression, finally, made recognizing the word part possible. Of the almost 200 words, this type of learning was only necessary 3 times. His progress is strong. Today, it is obvious he is far beyond Mr. 12:30 who quit earlier in the week.

He does not mind being pushed. He does things multiple times when I demand. I am ordering him around like a coach would do, but he seems to know this is just a way to build the neuro pathways. We stop and discuss, briefly, that this repeating stuff is not to harass him; it is about making his brain a "scanner" that can discern words automatically - without thinking - so he can read. At one point in the session, I turn and look him in the eye and say "We are going to get to that damn goal of reading westerns by Christmas!" I do not wait for him to agree; it is time to move on.

The video portion continues the pre-school content.... he is not embarrassed.... he is learning

6 September 2023 ..

And the beat goes on....

He met me in the hall yesterday. He was ready to begin, and I had been called away from our classroom for a moment.

As we went to "level 1" flash cards that had a word on one side and a sentence (with the word) on the other, his competency was obvious. Mastery would be a less accurate descriptive term; no errors (or almost none) does not imply grasp of the underlying concepts. "Once you get this, we can move on" is a stupid toxic concept. Still, as we came to the end of these cards, I told him "you will not have to see these again." He is not going to move on just yet, but that is no reason to not celebrate progress; there are other ways to keep working toward mastery.

His lack of basic letter sounds and how to combine them is a crazy quilt; some areas appear fully filled and then other area are gapping holes; a few others have a cover but it is of gossamer. Part of his strength is also a problem. Guessing is a good way to work toward expanding a vocabulary, but it is far from a valid stand alone skill at this stage. Sometimes his first (incorrect) response seems like a guess, and then he will correct himself. It is like a grocery checkout scanner that does not get a good reading the first time.

We went on to another set of flash cards that were words on both sides (still at level 1), and he was generally doing well, but at times, the incorrect guesses were obvious and had limited relation to the word presented. When he was shown WAY and said "away", I told him there was no such thing as ~~invidible~~ letters...  
*invisible*

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Back at it...

He keeps showing up. He struggles with fewer words. We are still finding that sounding out words is far from natural.

Is he pushing through brain fog? Can he not recall things? How can he forget the word S-I-G-N ? Because it is not ingrained in his brain. It has no quick point of reference. Still, he does not quick.

When a word is not quickly identified in a flash card, we will go over it - again and again and again. It has the feel of training a dog or a singer to hit a particular note; he does not fight the repetition. It is necessary. We mention often these repetitions are not because I doubt he knows the word; it is about something more; it is about knowing words without knowing that he is knowing it; I am not seeking to get him to know more; I am trying to make his brain a scanner - a scanner that will allow him to function with strange words.

Two letter sound combinations are not automatic yet. R-O-W is a stumbling block today. So, I try something new; I will try to show him how context can clue him into a word, so I write "row, row, row your boat." It seems to work. He recognizes YOUR and Boat; then, he figures out the missing word is row. A circuitous route, but it works this time.

O-N-C-E still seems to be a word he cannot identify. I try to give him a clue by writing the word one (that he identifies); that seems to work. To work, multiple approaches seem necessary, and I never know exactly what new ones will gain traction. Perhaps this is why so many reading programs can appear obscure and scattered; you have to throw many things at the problem and just see what sticks.

The officer responsible for instructing this inmate brings me the DVD and remote. Hooked on Phonics may seem like a cliché solution, but it is helping.

One of the ways these DVDs become an effective tool is when both the student and the facilitator make the viewing non-passive. Even when the presentation does not prompt him, he is saying the words or letters on the screen out loud. When a word comes on the screen, I am writing it on the board which is to the left (of the screen); this is not a distraction it is a reinforcement in two ways. What is written reinforces the material and me writing it reinforces that I am paying attention.

It is my observation that when an instructor treats DVDs as a babysitting tool (merely a device to keep a child sitting still and quiet), that is all that is accomplished. Even when that is not the facilitator's intention, the fact that they "plug the student in and walk away to do something else" confirms that babysitting is the only goal. Most of these inmates were left in daycare settings where keeping them still and quiet was the only goal. Those instincts include not thinking; when the student gets in babysitting mode, the brain shuts off.

My observation is that in correctional settings where the goal is instruction, the chances of success with a DVD presentation go to almost zero when you give an inmate an individual DVD player and a single set of headphones. They know they are being put in babysitting mode, and their brain shuts off. If there is a setting where such a scenario is the only option for exposing the student to the necessary content, the facilitator must engage, in some way, to validate what is on the screen and coming through the headphones.

At the end of the class, he makes a point of thanking me for working with him. Throughout the session, I have mentioned he is making progress. We will see what tomorrow brings.

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9 September 2023

Another day

He comes in, presents his work, and is ready to continue on this path of learning. The inmate, that suggested to me that this man could read, has no clue. If this is a long con, it is very good. I do not think this man would continue to suffer through these sessions unless he was trying to change, yet the change is very slight. He keeps trying and seems to be gaining a grasp, but the steps are tiny.

I take out his work and we go over the words he has copied. They are all the most basic of vocabulary, but none of them seem easy to him. As we get to a stopping place (more a point where his intellectual energy seems to fade), we move to his desk (the previous review happened standing up). He sits down and I ask him to go to a copying exercise from a workbook.

The copying exercise is equally practice on fine motor skills as well as literacy. He needs help on both. As with all of his writing, this is a very slow process.

I begin looking about the classroom and feel the need to begin getting him to see every word around him as a learning opportunity. This was a concept that he and I have discussed before, but it has not sunk in - or it does not seem to have resonated with him sufficiently to inspire action.

I note various word groups around the classroom and decide that the exercise will be one of learning a word group and then finding where it is located. On the board I write "Introduction to Business."

I ask him to take a break from his copying exercise to note what I have written, and we learn these three words. Then, I tell them that this word group is somewhere in the room and I will be asking him to locate that in the future. He seems to understand but is in no hurry to begin the search.

About that time, the officer responsible for this instruction brings in the "Hooked on Phonics" DVD and the remote. As I load the DVD and try to determine where we left off, he returns to his copying exercise.

When I find where we are to start, I ask him if he wants to finish what he is doing or go to the videos. It is no surprise that he immediately is ready to begin watching the video presentation. No doubt the video activates certain brain sensory areas that a copying exercise does not touch.

The DVD portion of the instruction is not passive, and he knows this; he is actively and appropriately using the videos as an opportunity to practice his articulation and phonemic awareness. If he is pretending, he is doing it very well and not afraid to appear like a small child; I think he is honestly willing to do whatever it takes to learn how to read, and I still cannot fully grasp the obstacles that he is confronting.

After many videos lessons, we stop so that he can copy words from those lessons; those words are on the board in front of him as I wrote them down while he was watching. He copies the last word as time for the class ends. Not our most impressive effort, but it was a good day.

I am told I will begin the Barton program with another inmate on Monday.

12 September 2023

Is any of it sticking?

A natural question but ridiculous nonetheless. Of course, things are sticking. Nothing leaves zero impression. The one thing that we are practicing is not quitting. Someone who is as old as he is, and cannot read, knows how to quit. Unlearning quitting is part of an adult learning how to read.

Thankfully, the possibility of taking on another literacy class has been removed from my duties. I do not see myself as a teacher. At best, I am an actor - pretending to be an inmate - for now, pretending to be a teacher that cares.

27

12 September 2023

Some words still trip him up....

As part of our routine, I go back to material that we used early in our work together. One flash card (from that earlier time) has a sentence with the word "writers" in it. From the very first, he will say, very often, workers when he comes to this particular word in this particular sentence. I will correct him, and then, when he attempts to read the sentence again, I will have to correct him again.

Flash cards of the two different words (writers and workers) have not caused him to avoid this mistake, and the fact he is making it today confirms something is happening that is not helping. Where is the confusion? They both begin with w and end with s. Could it be that simple.

I decide to write the word "writers" on the board first. I ask him to identify the word and he tells me "workers." Without disagreeing, I move to another part of the board and suggest we write the word "work." I ask him how to spell the word work, and he is stumped. We begin with the sounds of the word work:

1. What is the first sound we hear? He agrees the sound is the one made by a W, so I write a W.
2. I ask what is the final sound in the word work, and he agrees that is the K sound, so now, I write a K
3. He agrees that the R sound is somewhere in the middle between W and K, and with that, he is able to guess the word need an O.

It is always babysteps.

28

There has been a pause...

Staffing has prevented our literacy sessions for almost a week, but yesterday it seemed like things might be still on track.

During my Sunday shift at the library, I decided to prepare a set of cards and a expanded vocabulary/reading comprehension program to include in our work. There was some motivating energy, in me, to do this. Why, I am not sure.

Then as I walked back from the final meal of the day yesterday, the guy briefly spoke to me. Any exchanges I have with inmates are brief; conversations in this setting are rarely (very very rarely) something I do. Still as he walked by, he said hello and I confirmed things were all prepared for the coming week. This may sound like an insignificant exchange, but given the setting and my attitudes, it was a major effort on his part.

Our existing areas of focus will not shift, but it is clear that adult illiterates face a comprehension issue beyond their basic lack of word knowledge.

My Sunday shift at the library brought this to focus.

A black over-weight 23 year old inmate from an Illinois community outside of Chicago (but large enough to produce urban frequent flyers that keep the BOP in business) asked for help filling out a form from the Social Security Administration. Aside from the disgusting reality that a young nominal American citizen would be focused on filing for financial assistance as his first step in his return, most likely very brief, to a non-incarcerated life, he lack of reading comprehension was extraordinary.

He sincerely sought my help, and that allowed me to overcome my basic revulsion and politely answer questions. The amazing part was that he could generally read all of the words in a section of the form (the instructions on the information required), pause at the end of a sentence, and then, after reading it so clearly that how to respond was obvious to me, he would ask "what does that mean?" It was extraordinary.

For example the question might say: "If you have received financial payments from a previous employer, answer the following." After reading such a sentence, he wanted to know the meaning. I would ask him if he had ever worked for any one and been paid a wage (other than getting a share of the money in the sale of illegal drugs), and he would say no. We would discuss that that meant that he had never had an employer, and he would agree that was true, but still he sought guidance on how to respond. Such an experience confirmed a need to broaden what was happening in my literacy sessions.

I am starting by working with 5 flash cards with words and 5 flash with definitions of words. The words are: BOILING, WARM, LUKEWARM, CHILLY, and FREEZING. There are also a series of worksheets that support a student that is able to define these words. Once again, I am pulling material from a book that was in the long ignored educational materials of this department. They are not unusually neglectful, they merely buy more stuff than they could seriously consider using. Closets are full of junk like this.

We will see if we meet today.

29

FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/05/2023 07:13:14 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

5 October 2023

Back at it...

At some level, I was no longer teaching literacy sessions. There had been no formal end to the assignment, but other priorities of the Education Department had kept me from meeting with him for approaching a month. Like most failed education attempts, it would not be killed; it would merely wither away, and no one would particularly recall that the project had ever existed. That is where things were until he showed up at what had been the normal time.

He found me working in the library. My response at seeing him was, "Are you ready to have a class?" He nodded, and I suggested he meet me in the classroom. It did not occur to me that he would show-up. I had not prepared for the class, yet our approach did not require such labors. We had begun a path to learning and it would not be hard to return to that path.

I had given up and moved on, but clearly, he had not.

When I met him in the room, it came to me that the necessary remote (for the monitor) and DVD needed to be procured. Leaving him in the room waiting was not an option. We had always treated every second in that room as a time of learning, so I grabbed a set of flash cards, confirming that they were at a level that was appropriate, and created an assignment that he could do while I got the various materials.

At the Education Department staff office, the teacher responsible for this inmate was out. The department functions in silos, so no other teacher had any clue as to where the needed remote or DVD would be. That did not keep one staff member trying to help me, and I took the offered remote (it ended up being the wrong one for that classroom) asking that a message be given to the teacher responsible, when she returned, to bring the appropriate DVD to the classroom.

Back at the classroom, he was diligently working the assignment, and I asked him if he wanted to return to the video/DVD presentations we had been using for the weeks prior to our break. He definitely wanted to be back utilizing the videos, and I had no reason to doubt his sincerity. When the videos are playing, he is interacting, he is speaking the words and lessons along with the presentation (as it is supposed to work but most students, beyond pre-K, are too self-conscious/self-defeating to do that). Also, he hands me his homework from the last time we met.

The fact he has remembered to bring his homework to me makes me think:

1. Has he been carrying around this piece of paper for a month?
2. Does he truly see this homework as important?

I accept the work, quickly but thoughtfully review it, and thank him.

He then goes on to say: "I've got 13 points." This is a reference to his security level and confirms that moving to a lower security prison is possible. The common theme among inmates in a facility like this one, a medium security prison designated to receive discipline problems from other facilities, is to "get to a low" - a different facility with less restrictions on inmate movement and activities. So my natural response was, "Great, I guess that will let you go to a nicer place" (I know that there is no meaningful difference but it is a fiction too many inmates embrace to not acknowledge).

He responds, "No I don't want to move. I want to stay here and stay in school." My first reaction is, what school is he in? Then, it becomes clear to me; he thinks what we are doing is school. He sees this as a true learning environment; he does not see this as the ridiculous pointless daycare that it is. He goes on to say that he knows I am a good teacher and that he is making good progress because of me.

At some level, the guy is way off base. I do not care about anything. I can barely stand to be in the Education Department any more and if it did not give me material for my writing, I might arrange to never be there. That being said, I am an actor; I have always been an actor, and I like executing a role with credibility. In my role as a literacy tutor, I tell him what a great compliment he has given me, and that while he certainly might be able to go to a nicer prison, he could not find another inmate tutor who

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was more committed to his success. I told him I care very much for his success; it is a lie, but that is what the script says, and I am committed to a good performance. The words must be supported by actions, so only I will know none of this is real - he does not know either - he may end up with reading skills notwithstanding the fact all I am doing is performing - is that any different than what teachers do? don't know and don't care....

Some silly psychologist tried to tell me one time that everyone is an actor, but that is not the point. I am a very good actor.

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/06/2023 07:28:16 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

6 October 2023

Two in-a-row

He showed up again (yesterday). His excitement was clear as he told me he "went to commissary early" so he could make class. In his excitement, he forgot the previous day's homework, but his engagement was still high. He was ready to get to work.

The priority of commissary visits by inmates is something I tolerate and avoid criticizing. That does not change the fact that such economic activity is absolutely stupid, wasteful, unhealthy, and non-positive in many ways. The prison commissary inspires all of the bad habits that make inmates dysfunctional.

He was ready to work, attacked each task, but some of the items are simply not sticking. For the first time, I literally stopped and said "this has not sunk in." We went back and repeated the lesson. He did not take it as a negative comment specifically toward him, but he knew that his mind had not taken ownership of the letter combination of E and G. Yes, that is where we still are - there has been progress - but, he had years learning how to not learn - changing that takes time

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/07/2023 11:15:29 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

7 October 2023

Third in-a-row

Yesterday's meeting took us back to a weekly frequency that had not been the case for many weeks. Once again, simple operational logistics impacted our work. Lack of a dry erase marker that worked had me shift the format from where I would write letters on the board to one where I asked him to write out the letter - this changed everything.

While we started with words he was having trouble identifying, we quickly shifted to asking him to spell specific words - this had not been a task previously tried.

We are at the conclusion of a Hooked on Phonics DVD that offered extra supporting material. The first section goes through the alphabet, demonstrates the sound of each letter, and then provides a picture of a word that supports the particular featured letter - A for apple - B for bell - the process continues through Z for zebra. When each letter and picture came up, I paused the DVD and asked him to write out/spell the word. He had homework that included some of the words, so he had a multi-layered path to getting to the correct spelling. First, he would see if he knew the word. Cat and Dog were ones that he immediately knew. If he did not immediately know the word, he then went to his list. Next he would try to spell from sounds... It was a new way to learn for him

33

FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/10/2023 10:49:33 AM

To: --

Inmate Work Assignment: -

~~Should~~ <sup>for</sup> are illiterate inmates a high security risk ~~by~~ the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP)?

The data support an affirmative answer. These inmates should be caged and programed with great care, kept from any general population and only released from such a classification when they can pass a literacy exam at the third grade level or higher. Illiteracy is a security risk, degrades every tool used for managing inmates, and precludes all tools used by the BOP to communicate in their facility. To assume that oral communications are effective with an illiterate inmate is to ignore observational data. <sup>ies</sup>

This fact was crystalized in ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> experiences attempting to facilitate ~~it~~ <sup>for</sup> (I dare not call it teach) the literacy attempts of two inmates (inmate Griff and Jim). Griff wants to learn how to read and write, attends assigned sessions, and is making slight but measurable progress. Nevertheless, he remains incapable of reading basic instructions and is a walking drone for a manipulative inmate; he can neither protect himself or others from his actions based on not understanding published instructions or rules. On the day another inmate seeks to use Griff for activity in violation of the rules, he is an obvious target. He may not be an instigator of conduct in violation of BOP rules and other security risks, but he is a force multiplier. Finally, Griff, as most adult illiterates, has a history of being a pathological; his status as an adult, an America, required being constantly dishonest. While such a societal flaw <sup>(dishonesty)</sup> is common amongst inmates, combined with <sup>illiterate</sup> illiteracy, such inmates are uniquely dangerous.

Jim is the more common illiterate inmate and the more obviously dangerous. He ~~has~~ <sup>has</sup> and continues to actively conceal his inability to read and write. In fact, Jim is likely to act in a violent manner if, in certain settings, confronted with his dangerous ignorance. He would see such public disclosure as "putting his business out there" based on the nonsensical concept that his illiteracy is, in fact, not obvious to all. Further, he will seek to participate in other classes that require literacy, like adult continuing education, that may look positive on his inmate record, yet he will need to commit fraud and induce other inmates to help him to participate and get credit in such courses. Like rotting flesh in a kitchen, he degrades any learning environment for other inmates. He is a menace and to mainstream him, with inmates of a security level below high, is a degradation of the instruction and unsafe operationally.

Illiterate inmates can never been anywhere but a high security BOP institution until they are no longer illiterate. The obvious security risks go beyond the ones outlined in the brief descriptions of two inmates.

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/11/2023 06:57:26 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

11 October 2023

Sometimes the gaps in understanding are hard to understand....

We have given more attention to spelling skills - not perfection - the focus is simply phonetic spelling. The word is umbrella, and he was able to determine U-M-B-R-E-L-L with limited prompting, but the final letter in the word seems a challenge. We consider the sound that final letter should have, and that seems to be no help. In the past, I can present a word he recognizes and, at times, that can work as the recognized word has the same sound, within it, as the sound being sought. For example, when he was challenged with the double O sound in moon, his recognition of the words soon and loon was a good prompt.

Back to the last letter in the word umbrella - nothing seems to work. I turn to sentences he should be able to read. I write on the board:

I want \_\_\_ drink.

I want \_\_\_ break. and perhaps one other sentence with the same missing word. He can read the words I have printed but is absolutely stumped as to what will go in the blank. He begins suggesting ridiculous options and never stumbles upon the correct answer. Ultimately, I tell him the answer, and from that, with a bit more prompting, the final letter in umbrella is discovered. What causes such challenges?

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/12/2023 07:23:08 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

12 October 2023

Use the word in a sentence....

Again, it is the things we expect to be simple that are the hard ones. This may be why connecting his understanding of letter sounds is not quickly applied beyond seeing an individual letter. Each of the times he does not grasp the simple, it points to missed steps - this is why math teachers make students show their work. Unfortunately, in this case, seeing the "work" that is going on in his brain is not always obvious.

He now has work sheets, in addition to copying letters, to do when he is away from class. Homework, in a prison setting, is not always worthwhile, but in this case, it is time to try something new.

We have also started more reading of sentences aloud. Once he correctly reads the sentence, I ask him to write it down for copying, multiple times, when he is not in one of our sessions.

I do not know what we are accomplishing, but we are identifying missing pieces.

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/18/2023 06:40:02 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

18 October 2023 .

Are we stuck or have we simply not been meeting on a regular basis?

This is my question.

Four letter words can stump him.

Maybe it is time to do more reading aloud in the sessions.

The Hooked on Phonics DVDs are a format he embraces, but I cannot see progress. Yesterday, for the first time, we went over a single presentation twice.

He is fighting more than just a lifetime of not learning how to read; the brain injury - going through a windshield - seems very real. He is not quitting, so I will not quit.

If I had the power to end these sessions and move on to other projects of greater personal interest, staying this course would still be my choice. It is not loyalty, but I do want to honor his efforts, and I am curious how all this is going to end.....

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/19/2023 07:04:51 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

19 October 2023

"You did this...."

Those were his words. Our session did not include DVD's or use of the white board as those supplies were not available. Such items are never within my immediate access and must be brought to me by a staff member. So, we were working on flash cards and reviewing his work from the day before including his homework.

The concept of authoring an original sentence is not something he fully grasp. He seems to understand the exercise of creating an original set of words, but the need to capitalize the first letter and to have a subject (i.e. not merely a predicate) were teaching points of today.

The flash cards continue to expose a level of lack of phonemic skills, but the progress continues. He is fighting more than lack of understanding; I am certain he is battling a brain that is full of static and will not let him retain and focus, yet he stays at it.

As we conclude the aforementioned activities, I get two books - the first one is a book that we have periodically read since our first session on 28 July 2023. I give him that book, and he begins. The reading is not mastery, but it has a flow that approaches what happens when a literate person reads sentences. With each completed page, I respond positively as a coach would do to an athlete in training. It is clear he is doing the best he has ever done with this book. As he pauses, he says "you did this." It is a compliment, but I immediately let him know that learning is accomplished by his efforts - not mine.

His expression was one of thanks and embodied the natural humility of an adult that has been beaten down for decades and told he is worthless. He maybe worthless by some obscure obnoxious standard; that is not my concern. I want to help him read and write at a level that removes that learning lack as a predators path.

The work continues...

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/20/2023 06:39:12 PM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

20 October 2023

He came today - Is this progress?

He was anxious to show me his work. He was quick to let me know he had tried to do his best. It was a good effort. He still copies words blindly - OTHES was not an assigned word, but when he miscopied OTHER, the error continued. It never occurred to him to question whether he was copying real words. This reminds me of the literacy approaches that use nonsense words (words that have a phonetic pronunciation, but are not in the dictionary), and we may need to add those teaching approaches.

He is gaining confidence and showing progress. It is more than memorizing, but the blind spots and inability to recall somethings is jarring. Today, the word wow was such a stumbling block. He had no clue. When I wrote COW, HOW, and BOW, it did not help. He was stuck on a three letter word and could not identify correctly the various three and four letter words that ended in o-w and could have prompted him. Finally, with many hints, he was able to figure out how to pronounce B-O-W W-O-W when I told him it was a sound a dog made. It worked for a second, but three pages later, W-O-W was a mystery again except for his comment "this is the one giving me trouble."

No one is quitting. We ended the session celebrating much progress, but I am without a clue as to what is happening. We have been at this since 28 July 2023 and W-O-W stumps him?

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/24/2023 08:12:53 PM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

24 October 2023

Adult Literacy

He showed up. He is writing in complete sentences (most of the time) and remembers to capitalize at the beginning of the sentence and end with a period (most of the time). What causes him to forget - He is not rushing through the work, but that is what the product looks like - it is all a mystery

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 10/24/2023 09:10:17 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

24 October 2023

The work continues

He shows up and presents his work. So much of it looks the same, but instead of doing the minimum of 2 pages in his workbook, he has done four. He is now capitalizing the first letter of the first word of the sentence and periods are the norm.

One new development is that he is attempting phonetic spelling. It still looks a bit like a guessing game, but it is a start. How can he think he is spelling the word jacket without including t in the word? These are some of the missing parts.

Simple words still may trip him up. S-A-W was not immediately identified in a flash card, but was read correctly in a sentence. Then, the next time (seconds later) when S-A-W was presented, he was stumped - I just do not get it.

We are moving more to alternating between phonics, flash cards, reading individual sentences, and reading books in each class. I do not know what is sticking. He is asking more often, "How am I doing?"

We will keep pushing forward.

(41)

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 11/03/2023 11:30:02 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

3 November 2023

After many days of not meeting....

He was there and ready to jump back in - It was good to have supplied him with a workbook - this is a good tool for his ongoing study - this is a road that will never end

He paused, once again, to express his appreciation of what "I was doing for him." My response was that I am not sure what we are doing but one thing is for sure ... we are not going to quit. We spoke of how learning never stops and that is how he must share his growing literacy skills.

At some point he decided to share with me the fact that he had an auto accident where he went through the windshield of the car. It happened when he was 12 and he attributes that event to when things became difficult for him. I have not asked if he could read before the accident and if not why.... It may be of historical interest, but it does not change the need for us not to quit and the fact that much of his past failure is based on quitting

We only worked from his workbook and with notes I wrote on the board - perhaps tomorrow we will be back to the DVDs

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 11/03/2023 05:34:33 PM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

3 November 2023

It happened when he was 12 years old....

It came up today. He was a straight A student and 12 years old. Then, he went through the windshield of a car, was in a coma for three months, and for the next 48 years, he has not been able to read. I am not dealing with a person that never knew how to read, I am working with a brain damaged person who lost the ability to read.

Again, that changes very little in the simple approach of never quitting, but it does change what I may try to access. He will try anything. Is there a different approach for those with brain damage.

He seems to be making progress, and we will not quit, but there may be something we can do that is better.

I had always sensed that he had not chosen to wander through life illiterate, but now it is time to keep moving.

He is younger than me, but I reflect on my life at the age of 12. It was the year that teachers began putting me at the absolute top of the class from time to time. In previous class settings, I had been in the top 4 or 5 kids, and had enjoyed a few moments of being the best, but as a 12 year-old, my academic dominance, in many classes, finally established itself as the standard. In certain subjects, I would be the best and that has never changed. To imagine a life where that same year became to moment where every tool previously mastered disappeared because of an auto accident is beyond sobering.

The BOP is less than skilled with illiterate inmates - what resources can I find for brain damaged learning?

(43)

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 11/07/2023 07:57:15 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

7 November 2023

How do you teach a brain damaged 60 year old inmate how to read?

The question is more complicated than that. He used to read - 48 years ago - before an auto accident. He remembers a time when he could read, but how he did it, back then, is a mystery to him.

All of the teaching tools seem to be geared to dyslexia or inmates whose neglectful parents (supported by a worthless public school system for problems like these) avoided making literacy a priority. This is different. The same tools may be of use, but I sense the obstacles are different. Plus, this student has been in other reading programs before - nothing worked.

When it comes to acquiring any skill, a few basic axioms seem to apply:

1. Quitting cannot be an option - to think there will be a point where "this is a waste of time" is an idiotic concept except for losers.
2. Less is probably more - too many stimuli may help sustain engagement, at times, but it generally distracts.
3. Daily work is not optional - the sessions do not need to be lengthy but every 24 hour period requires some work on the objective

I am starting with making sure he has a workbook for daily efforts including days where a lockdown keeps us from meeting. It is also interesting to note that he does better with the phonics DVDs when the sound is off; the DVD graphics prompt him to practice phonemic awareness, but the sound, that may be designed to be reinforcing, is, in his case, a distraction. He is more capable of focusing with less stimuli.

And the beat goes on...

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 11/28/2023 06:35:57 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

28 November 2023 - Adult Literacy Unfiltered

He walked in and was ready to continue. In his hand was the workbook he had been using, and now every page was complete. As I glanced at it, it appears his penmanship is improving, and the areas to improve remain many.

Just because he has filled every page of the workbook does not mean that all items are correct. Additionally, I do not have a similar tool to continue using with him. I am going to shift to him correcting his own work in a way to further use the same material. I will tab a few pages, and then tell him to review them, see if he thinks there needs to be certain changes, and bring it back to me. The out of class portion of his work seems to be necessary.

In this setting, I was adverse to the concept of homework. First, it seemed like an excuse for lackluster classroom effort on the part of both instructor and student. Second, the environment of a prison housing unit is rarely conducive to any positive brain function. However, his progress has been better when we add homework and it is the only way to sustain a spirit of on-going learning during periods of lockdown.

We are still stuck in kindergarten/first grade material and there is no need to expect that we are going to go much further faster. We can go over the same lessons and continue to be incomplete in mastery. Sometimes things are clicking and sometimes things are not clicking.

Towards the end of the class, I handed him the first book we ever read. He was able to read almost every word, and celebrating the progress was an important motivator for him and perhaps me as well.

I am beginning to think about what was established as our goal on the first day - reading Westerns by Christmas. Clearly, all obstacles were not identified at that time, and the end of December 2023 will not bring us to a "Mission Accomplished" moment. Still, we will end this year with a western novel in his hand and the work will continue...

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 11/29/2023 06:35:13 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

Adult Literacy Unfiltered

29 November 2023

I am trying to weave everything we are doing together. In any teaching environment, there is a process of building on the concepts previously presented, but the natural energy to do that is not happening. We are going through some of the same materials and continue to find places where there is not understanding.

I took his homework book and tabbed certain pages where there is something amiss. It will be his job to figure out what is wrong and fix it. I told him identifying the problem was a good start and he should make note of the problem even in cases where he is uncertain as to how to solve the problem. Such a new assignment was certain to not be understood unless we went through an example.

On place in his workbook, he had written a sentence where the word he wrote was DROVE when he meant to write the word DRIVING. When I asked him to read the sentence, he used the word DRIVING, and it took me pointing out what he had actually written to make the point. When he agreed that DROVE was the wrong word, the challenge then was how to spell the correct word; he had no idea on how to start. I prompted him to accept that the "ing" sound would be spelled ING; he was able to figure out that the word should start with a D, and R. However, it was impossible for him to figure out (or even guess) that there would be the letter "I" between the DR and the ING to complete the spelling of the word.

We work the same book, and now, I am going back to the same DVD section. We are working on word identification. Mere identifying a word that is on the screen and finding it on a list can be a challenge. The work continues...

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 11/30/2023 07:28:34 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

30 November 2023

Adult literacy unfiltered

I looked at his workbook, complimented him on correcting certain of the tabbed pages and let him know that a couple of the pages had not been fixed. I picked a couple of more pages for him to review as homework for the next day. The routine was not unique except for the fact that I presented him with a new book; he did well.

When he finished the book, we started a discussion about what he had read. This was a new approach. I explained that I was not trying to pick on him. Asking questions about what he had just read was a way of helping his brain process information.

the day did not show unique promise, but the beat goes on...

the class ended abruptly when an inmate wandered into the class, asked for the battery in the remote control I was using for the DVD player, and I declined. He then went to the electrical clock on the wall and took it apart to remove the battery. He then used the battery to light a fire that he used to smoke drugs. Such conduct is a felony, and I did not seek to remain in the presence of a crime scene - class was over...

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/01/2023 06:23:43 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

1 December 2023 Unfiltered Adult Literacy

He brings in his workbook and the words he has copied - It is time to begin working on penmanship - he is starting to catch his own mistakes but there is still some disconnect between the words he writes down and what he is saying.

He wrote the sentence: I have four car. When he spoke the sentence, he said the plural of cars, yet he did not see the error in his written sentence. I wrote the sentence: "I have one car." on the board, and then began writing the sentence he had written, but had him dictate it to me. The process was slow, but he finally saw the need to adjust the word car to a plural.

The battle continues...

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/02/2023 06:30:33 PM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

2 December 2023 - Adult Literacy Unfiltered

Iterative design is when you try and then learn from failures, rather than attempting to foresee all challenges in advance. While SpaceX may be the most noted practitioner of iterative design, it also seems to describe my literacy efforts with the student that will not quit and keeps showing up.

Every time we approach a new assignment, he seems to find a new way to fail, and those failures give a point of reference for the next teaching point. Perhaps others adopt iterative design because it avoids analysis paralysis and delivers a continuum of innovation, but for me, on this assignment, iterative design uncovers ways to fail that could not be reasonably anticipated.

There is a disconnect between what he can articulate, what he writes down, and the necessary sounds of a word.

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/04/2023 06:22:29 PM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

4 December 2023 - Unfiltered Adult Literacy

We are working many angles. We reinforce constantly, yet three letter words are not automatic, two letter sounds are confused, the need to make a word plural when using a plural word or putting a period at the end of a sentence is not automatic.

He is recalling some things. I have begun asking him to do more types of homework.

His penmanship is improving.

He was presented the word racecar and was stumped. When shown the word race, he could identify it, and he identified car, but when the word was combined, he said "racingcar." We have laughed a few times about the fact that a word can have silent letters - the k in know for example, but there is no concept for invisible letters - that means there can be no invisible "ing" in racecar! Sometimes, I do raise my voice but never in a tone that is in disparagement. There was a tone of voice we used on the ranch when herding animals and another member of the team was getting it wrong - it was yelling, but the tone made it clear there was no personal disparagement even when the language was less than G rated. That is how it is when I am raising my voice with him.

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/06/2023 06:27:44 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

6 December 2023 Unfiltered Adult Literacy

I prepare for his arrival by reviewing a DVD section and writing down some of the words that will be presented; when he arrives he will copy them. I then cue the DVD to the start of one of the lessons - a lesson he has seen multiple times.

He comes in with his homework. There are letter combinations that do not make words. This is on an assignment where he is copying. Is he simply unable to focus or careless. I think he wants to perform, but his inability to catch mistakes (some of the time) continues to baffle me. We go to another part of his home work, and the invisible letter problem is back. He has formed a sentence using the plural of the word horse, he reads the sentence with the plural of the word horse, but he writes the singular form of the word horse, and it takes multiple different strategies for him to see the error. We talk about the S sound at the end of the plural of the word horse and the need for there to be a letter that reflects this sound; he seems to understand the concept, but a grasp seems hard.

He is struggling with the new homework book. The proper name Donny is repeatedly read as Danny. I have asked him to make a list of the words that give him trouble. Pushing him to do more homework is merely another attempt to try something that is positive.

He is a different student than where we were in July of this year, but the progress is hard to identify. So much remains broken.

(51)

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/07/2023 06:35:27 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

7 December 2023 Unfiltered Adult Literacy

And now for something completely different ... That was a standard line in my first favorite comedy offering from the BBC, and it applied to yesterday's class.

We had a spelling test, he had to put a heading on a blank piece of paper, he was then given some 50 words, and at the end he was given the correct answers and told to grade it himself as homework. Once he had corrected all the words, he is to fill the paper copying the words (a standard part of previous homework assignments).

I did not review his workbook, but did review the written homework of the night before. Asking him to read a simple book and write down any words he could not figure out appeared to be an assignment he could handle, but it looked like he had stopped at the second page of the book. No matter, I added another book and made the assignment again.

We then went to the DVD presentation and it appears his recall is improving - maybe his grasp of phonics too, but that is more of a leap.

The beat goes on...

(52)

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/08/2023 07:17:16 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

8 December 2023 Unfiltered Adult Literacy

He arrived and was very pleased to tell me that he found no words that he could not discern in one of the books assigned for home work. He asked, "Do you want me to read it for you?" Clearly, the only appropriate answer was yes, and his level of ability was as good or a little better.

His corrected spelling test - where he does the corrections looked like an improved product as well.

He seems to be developing a sense of what he does and does not know. Not a complete grasp, but it is a great change from the defeated attitude of knowing nothing.

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/10/2023 06:37:46 PM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

10 December 2023 Unfiltered Adult Literacy

He came in Friday with the same energy as the day before - He wanted to show me his ability to read. The books are small and ones that we have reviewed more than a few times, but his excitement was obvious.

We continue with copying words, spelling tests, and reviewing phonics.

He was given more books for the weekend - we will see what Monday brings

(54)

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/12/2023 06:50:34 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

12 December 2023 Adult Literacy Unfiltered

He walked in and was ready to show he reading abilities once more. It happened that the staff member responsible for this particular program walked in and I asked her if she had time to listen to him. Her enthusiastic response encouraged him, he seemed a bit nervous, but was ready.

His reading demonstration included moments where he had to apply phonics, sometimes incorrectly, and other words just stumped him (like MUSIC and BOUNCE). Why certain words are a challenge is unsure. Does he have any comprehension of context and what he is reading is unsure. He does grasp it in some way, but I think the effort to read is so significant that other thoughts are hard to organize. Perhaps that will come with greater confidence.

He feels he is making progress - that is all that matters for just now...

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/13/2023 06:01:23 PM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

13 December 2023 Adult Literacy Unfiltered

!00 words - America stumped him -he could not remember it 3 minutes later - he is not quitting but we need to keep trying everything - the beat goes on

56



FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/16/2023 07:17:28 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

16 December 2023 Unfiltered Adult Literacy

I gave him his Christmas present - a western novel in large print. Based on my reading of the first few pages, the piece is no great work, but he immediately started reading it aloud. As he read, it was unclear to me how much he was able to grasp or if the effort to read the words took all of his concentration - regardless, he is showing interest, and hopefully, this book will be a vehicle for him to work on more reading skills while away from our sessions.

He continues to come to class with good energy and a strong attitude. the mystery remain as to how certain simple words can trip him up day after day:

What is so hard about the word ALSO?

How can any American not immediately recognize the word AMERICA?

He is not checked out. He is not distracted in some obvious way.

Multiple strategies seem to allow steady tiny progress - writing words, reading words, speaking words, recognizing phonics, these are the things we continue to repeat. Some times a word on the television is easier recognized than a word on a page in front of him. What is in his brain continues to defy any pattern I can recognize as we keep trying...

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/18/2023 05:25:28 PM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

18 December 2023 Unfiltered Adult Literacy

He is excited to get started. His attitude is positive. In going through the hooked on phonics videos he is fine, but he still cannot recognize the word America. What is happening?

(58)

FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 12/22/2023 06:40:01 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

22 December 2023 Unfiltered Adult Literacy

ENW - I asked him what word was that - He, immediately told me it was the word NEW - Well, dyslexia seems to be an issue as well. It had never appeared in his other writings, but when I asked, he told me it "happens from time to time"

We are already implementing strategies that are part of dyslexia literacy - there is not a magic pill -but knowing this allows the multi-modal strategies to continue with more purpose - I gave him flash cards - that include words he continues to struggle with - we will see if progress is accomplished with him taking flash cards back to his cell ...

23 December 2023

He came in yesterday. He had worked on his flash cards but words still stumped him including study. Each time he encounters a word, it seems like a new experience, but there is progress. Imagining the fog of his life escapes me. He does not know or seem to recognize the words for numbers, months, or days of the week. The flash cards & phonics continue ...

TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 01/04/2024 07:05:16 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

4 January 2024 Adult Literacy Unfiltered

He brought in his flash cards, book he had been provided as a homework assignment, and his homework as he told me "they are shipping me to a low." This was no surprise given his age and status as a sex offender. The sooner sex offenders get to lower security prisons, the sooner they are not subject to a community that segregates and abuses them because of their past convicted conduct. Whether such offenders merit that treatment matters not, it is simply a fact.

This was information that did not exactly correspond with a conversation a few months ago where he told me he had declined a transfer to remain at this prison and keep learning. Since that time, he has made progress, perhaps he has gotten enough self confidence to realize that his literacy growth now must be self driven. While the treatment of sex offender inmates has not, to my knowledge, escalated in the past weeks, the conditions remain what they have been. The day before our class meeting, yesterday, his cellmate (another sex offender) had "gone to the SHU."

His description, when asked by a prison official, as to what happened was that he did not know, his cellmate got a black eye, and the next thing that happened was he checked in. In fact, there was a transaction that involved "taking his phone minutes." "They were tryin' to take his minutes" is what I was told privately. In this culture, the "they" and the "why" did not need to be articulated. Maybe that had something to do with his transfer too.

The pause in our meetings has not impacted his progress. He now has a skill I can call phonemic awareness and he is able to sound out certain short words. Our time together will probably not last more than a week more, but in that time we will combine auditory, articulation, and writing drills. He left our meeting with a new set of flash cards and other homework.

The progress continues. I will try to reflect on this experience after he is gone.

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 01/05/2024 06:57:36 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

5 January 2023 Unfiltered Adult Literacy

He brought in his home work. His energy is high. Getting confirmation that certain words are what he thinks seems to be a part of validation he craves. "What word is \_\_\_\_" is the type of statement he makes seeking confirmation.

The skills are there, but when they come in and when they seem to disappear is hard to guess. A word that was a particular challenge, yesterday, was Indian another was mountain. In both cases the two letter phonemic break down should have been easy, but it was not.

Articulating non-words is something he finds acceptable. He is just grasping for the right answer and guessing seems to be a fair option.

There are some methods of introducing phonics that include non-sense words, but we have never do not. When I ask him why he would suggest some non-sense word, he has no reply. He never has a reply to such questions, and I do not press for one. The point is made by the question.

There are times he seems in the groove, and that may be the problem. Pushing beyond his comfort zone is the place for learning, but hiding from it seems to be the desired state...

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\*Request to Staff\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 01/05/2024 05:52:36 PM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

5 January 2023 Adult Literacy Unfiltered

"Ya learnt me a lot" that is how he summed up our work that began on 28 July 2023. He is on to another prison and his file is on a prison officer's desk.

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TRULINCS 66834380 - JONAS III, WILLIAM JAMES - Unit: GIL-A-D

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FROM: 66834380

TO: Unit A

SUBJECT: \*\*\* Request: SU-IF\*\*\* JONAS III, WILLIAM, Reg# 66834380, GIL-A-D

DATE: 01/07/2024 11:55:40 AM

To: -

Inmate Work Assignment: -

7 January 2023 Adult Literacy Unfilled EPILOGUE

The project began on 28 July 2023 and ended on 5 January 2024. The student walked away convinced he had made progress, thankful for the attention he received, and by his own statements committed to continuing a path of learning. Is there a better standard for success?

The reality is that he is still illiterate and the progress is less than a single character in a pre-K course.

I never found a better or worse strategy that worked better or worse. At every stage, it was important to re-visit the reason for the repetitive instruction. When the physiological process of building neural pathways is explained, the portions of the instruction that are often called "drill and kill" are more easily accepted. The student seemed to grasp the concept of building, in the brain, some form of muscle memory. This may be a way to get GE students to better understand how math drills, to the point of rote, are important.

I still do not know what works or what will work the next time.

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