

February 22, 2010

Dr. Geier, Dean of Students.
Northern State University
1200 S. Jay Street
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Dear Dr. Geier:

Thank you so much for the opportunity that you and your staff provided, making it possible for me to come to NSU to observe what Dr. Houge is doing in his reading lab.

With eleven years of experience in the public schools, a masters in reading and curriculum development from Loyola University, thirty-one years of experience in founding and directing a reading agency that at some times of the year employed up to 40 part-time tutors, and then three years of experience as an educational consultant, I did not come to Aberdeen with any expectation other than learning more about the what Dr. Houge is doing with distance learning.

I couldn't have been more dead wrong.

Yes, I had many of my questions regarding how web-cam, home-based tutoring works from a technological point of view.

At the same time, however, I observed one of the most carefully crafted and administered reading tutorial programs that I have ever been exposed to.

With a blend of input by the tutor and output by the student, cycled through at least three to four times, each part exercising different parts of the brain crucial to decoding sound and symbol matches, recognizing words after understanding the process of syllabication, gaining fluency and accuracy in oral reading, encoding multi-syllable words that reflected what they had just reviewed regarding a particular set of phonemes, and then providing feedback regarding the content of what they had heard, the program was obviously highly effective.

What impressed me equally was how Dr. Houge has structured the lessons so that each tutor is working on the same component at the same time, an administrative feat that would challenge the most gifted administrator in the country. In fact, I would say that Dr. Houge is a pioneer in his field.

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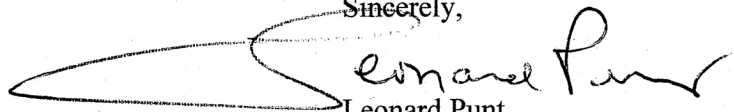
The proof of the pudding is in the eating and I was so impressed with how second and third graders were at ease syllabifying and then recognizing multi-syllable words such as illustration, illegible, and spectacular. On another occasion I heard one middle-school student ask his tutor if he could read ahead on his own.

And all this is being accomplished with undergraduate students, no less.

I think Dr. Houge's program represents the wave of the future in helping students who would not otherwise be able to access and/or afford the more traditional types of tutoring available today.

Once again, thank you.

Sincerely,



Leonard Punt
President

✓ Cc: Dr. Timothy Houge