Educators Learn About the Science of Reading

On November 12, Alpha Beta Chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society met at the Dominy Memorial Library in Fairbury to hear Anne Marie Gump, noted English Language Learner Specialist at Williams Bay School District in Wisconsin speak on “The Science of Reading: The Latest Reading Wars? Or Best Practices?”.

Disagreement on the teaching of reading goes back to the 1800’s when phonics was taught and along came famous educator Horace Mann who said the “look-say” or whole language method was better. (If someone learned to read out of the Dick and Jane books, that is the look-say method.) In 1997 the federal government formed the National Reading Panel to study all the relevant research on the teaching of reading.

Scientists do know how reading works in the brain. Advancements have been made in what kind of reading to teach, how to teach reading skills, and using structures like MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) to aid those children who need extra help. Phonics is still used in teaching reading as 80% of our words are decodable. Some words are frequently used but are not decodable and have to be seen, said, and remembered. The primary grades (K-3) are the key grades in learning to read. Currently in the U.S. one-third of the children are deficient in reading at the 3rd grade level when they advance to 4th grade. Unfortunately, two-thirds of children who grow up and can’t read well go on welfare or go to prison.

There are a variety of systems to follow in teaching at the K-3 grade levels and once a system is chosen for a school, it is important that the grade levels through 8th grade follow the same sequence for the best results. Research in the recent past has elevated the teaching of reading to a scientific level. If interested in learning more about knowing how to read, go to this documentary which will soon be released: https://thetruthaboutreading.com.

At the Alpha Beta business meeting Treasurer Janet Kilgus (Fairbury) reported that the chapter has purchased 11 wells plus provided matching funds for another in Africa through the Marion Medical Mission. Pres. Marcia Wahls (Chenoa) reminded collegiate members of the chapter grants and early career teachers of the $100 grants for classroom projects.

The DKG State Convention will be held at the Double Tree/Hilton Hotel in Oak Brook on April 21-23. The information and application are available in the winter issue of the *Newscaster.* The chapter will need to decide about participation in the chapter bazaar and design a poster that shares information about Alpha Beta programs and activities.

The next meeting on February 7 will be via Zoom and the program will feature Mary Stayner and Sue Dion presenting “Welcome to Valentangle: Zentangle—the Key to Relaxation”. PD’s available.

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International (DKG) promotes professional and personal growth and excellence in education. The Society has chapters in 17 countries and provides grants for educational projects, scholarships, leadership training, mentoring, and global networking opportunities. For more information, visit www.dkg.org or contact Carol Hughes at chughes@mtco.com.

**Photo: Connie Rich (Fairbury) along with Kendall Fulop (Germantown Hills) and Kammi Lamprecht (East Peoria) discuss the science of reading with Anne Marie Gump (middle).**

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