

Richards Learning Systems: Revolutionizing Reading Education



Discover how Richards Learning Systems is transforming literacy with their innovative, evidence-based approach to teaching reading.

A Game-Changing Moment in Education

It's often said that the future of education lies in how well we teach our children to read. However, for Carole Richards, founder of Richards Learning Systems, the path to literacy is often more complex and challenging than it should be. After more than 40 years in the field of literacy instruction, Carole realized that the system was failing to truly teach all students to read, especially those who needed it the most. It was this realization that led her to create the revolutionary program now known as *Sammy and the Magical Reading Chest*, a program that has not only transformed the lives of children but also redefined how reading is taught.

A Mission to Teach the World to Read

Carole Richards' journey into literacy education began long before she founded Richards Learning Systems. Over the course of decades, Carole worked directly with thousands of teachers and students across a range of educational settings, from mainstream classrooms to special education and even gifted programs. This hands-on experience gave her a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities in literacy education, which became the foundation of her approach.

Early on, Carole recognized a disturbing trend: many teacher training programs were failing to adequately prepare educators to teach reading. Issues like insufficient training in systematic phonics, reliance on outdated methods like three-cueing, and a lack of classroom experience before teachers entered the workforce were rampant. As a result, new teachers often felt underprepared to teach the foundational skills that struggling readers so desperately needed. The cost of retraining teachers became an additional burden, with some programs requiring upwards of 700 hours of retraining.



The Shift to Video-Based Learning

Carole's breakthrough moment came when she began to see firsthand how traditional training methods were falling short. One of her tutors, despite taking training three times, was still struggling to grasp the concepts. That's when she turned to video-based learning to bridge the gap. She created a video series featuring Sammy, a beloved character who would serve as a guide for both students and teachers.

This approach made an immediate impact. The tutor, previously unable to apply the concepts effectively, became a “rock star” of reading instruction. One notable success was a nonverbal autistic 7-year-old who, after just three years of working with the program, was reading complex words and engaging in conversations. This success story became a symbol of the program’s potential to reach students of all backgrounds and abilities.

Richards Learning Systems didn’t stop there. Carole’s team developed a comprehensive suite of tools and resources that integrated video lessons, workbooks, multi-sensory materials, and hands-on techniques that made the process of learning to read enjoyable for students and accessible for teachers and parents alike. The result is a program that requires no outside training and can be implemented by anyone, parents, tutors, and volunteers, without a teacher’s guide or complex instructions.

The Science of Reading: Backed by Research and Experience

What sets *Sammy and the Magical Reading Chest* apart is its foundation in the Science of Reading, an evidence-based approach to teaching literacy that emphasizes phonics, phonemic awareness, and systematic instruction. Richards Learning Systems incorporates the latest research into every lesson, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills they need to become successful readers.

From alphabetic knowledge and phonological awareness to oral language development and rapid object/letter naming, the program is designed to address the critical precursors of later reading achievement. This comprehensive, systematic approach ensures that every student is given the best possible foundation for reading success.

A Global Impact: Transforming Literacy Across the World

Carole’s mission has grown beyond the classroom. The program’s success in the United States has spurred interest abroad, and Richards Learning Systems has begun to transform literacy education in international communities. In Africa, for example, a principal in a school expressed interest in implementing the program, and Carole connected with a special education teacher in Israel who saw the potential of the program to help teach English and reading.

The program’s impact has been so profound that it has earned recognition from major educational institutions. This month, Richards Learning Systems was featured on the cover of *Education Insider Magazine* as the Top Reading Program of 2025, a testament to its effectiveness and innovative approach. Carole’s work was also recognized in *All The Worlds* magazine as one of the 20 Most Impactful People to Watch in 2025, further solidifying her place as a thought leader in literacy education.



The Literacy Crisis: Addressing the Challenges in Education

Despite the widespread success of Richards Learning Systems, the broader education landscape continues to face significant challenges. The “Reading Wars”, the ongoing debate between whole language and phonics, balanced literacy versus structured literacy, and whether reading is a natural process or one that must be explicitly taught, have led to fragmented approaches and inconsistent literacy outcomes across schools and districts.

Moreover, politics and bureaucracy in literacy education often undermine the ability of educators to provide the best instruction. Programs are sometimes chosen based on political or ideological agendas rather than solid research. As a result, flawed programs gain widespread adoption, further complicating the literacy issue.

Richards Learning Systems remains steadfast in its commitment to evidence-based methods and practical, real-world solutions that empower both teachers and students.

A Personal Story of Transformation: Literacy in the Workplace

Carole’s program has also found success beyond traditional classrooms. For over a decade, Richards Learning Systems has brought its approach to companies, teaching adults in the

workplace how to read, many for the first time. One particular moment that stands out in Carole's mind is when she was sent to troubleshoot a class of nonreaders at a tough shop. Even the union steward was in the room. As Carole stood before them with a sock puppet on her hand, she told the group, "Please don't laugh at me, but you'll never forget me with this sock on my hand."

The power of that moment wasn't just in the puppet, it was in the connection that Carole made with the learners. By meeting them where they were and treating them with respect and dignity, she was able to teach them to read, opening doors to new opportunities for them in their personal and professional lives.

Visit [Richards Learning Systems](#) today to learn more about how you can be part of this revolutionary approach to teaching reading. Together, we can teach the world to read.

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