

Focus on...Bridges Academy

Language to literacy – literally speaking!

Language development and the impact on learning has become a focal point of education across the nation. The direct correlation of language to reading has launched a new collaboration between Bridges Academy, a private school for students with reading disabilities, and the University of Central Florida's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Students with language related learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and auditory processing disorders often struggle with communication skills, comprehension in reading and have difficulty with spelling, grammar and creative writing tasks.

Several students who attend Bridges Academy receive speech and language therapy services at the Speech and Language Clinic at UCF. The clinic permits university students who are seeking their master's degree in speech and language therapy to learn to assess and treat students with speech and language difficulties.

Dr. Barbara Ehren, the Director for the Doctoral Program, met with **Jacqueline Egil**, the Executive Director of Bridges Academy, to discuss the needs of the students attending Bridges Academy. The collaboration of the speech clinic with Bridges Academy led to the launch of assigning a Scholar in Residence to the school.

Lynne Telesca, a speech pathologist who is a candidate for the doctorate program, was assigned to Bridges Academy to oversee and train graduate level speech pathologists who are completing their coursework. The focus is to promote evidence-based practice, engage in research and professional development design, and implement assessments and intervention. The year-long project

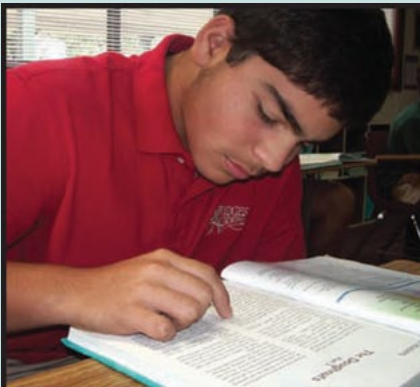
will permit the clinicians to provide intervention in the classroom for the Bridges Academy students, as well as provide onsite individual sessions for students who need more support with speech, articulation and language therapy.

"Our parents are thrilled with the collaboration of the University and Bridges Academy. We are able to bring the resources of the speech and language pathologists to all of our students" reports Mrs. Egli. Some students who are considered language sensitive and need structured strategies to improve their use of vocabulary or enhance their written language will get services that will boost their overall performance across all subjects. Those students who need intensive one on one therapy are able to get additional support for their specific needs. All of the classroom teachers at Bridges Academy are also able to cross train with the speech and language therapists, creating a continuum of support across the curriculum and throughout the school day.

This model of Scholar in Residence is considered a pilot model by UCF and is being considered at other Universities across the Nation. Dr. Ehren and Mrs. Egli are delighted with the success of this project so far and are looking forward to expanding this next year. ♦ *01/15/12*



Jose Menendez works with classroom teacher, Pam Camhi and her students. Lynne Telesca, Scholar in Residence (standing) oversees the group therapy session



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