



THE
SNAKE RIVER MONTESSORI SCHOOL, INC.

Preschool
2970 E. 1st Street

Kindergarten
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Elementary
(208) 524-4730

Dear Mr. Morris,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jill Schurman and I am the Educational Director of the Snake River Montessori School in Idaho Falls, ID. I am also the lead teacher for the Preschool/Kindergarten classes at that school. I have over 30 years of experience as a Montessori teacher and was proclaimed Educator of the Year in Idaho Falls in 2000.

I have lectured my parents for years that they should allow *very* limited television and video viewing time for all children, but most especially for children from birth to 6 years of age (when 50% of a child's neurological development occurs). However, a fellow educator (who has argued with me for years about the educational use of television) asked me to take a critical, but open minded, look at your programs. She has been very excited about your programs and feel that they are useful in the home and in the classroom as an important adjunct to classroom instruction.

Accordingly, I presented "Mr. Word Wizard," "The Search for the Magic 'S' Word," and "20,000 Leagues under the Sea" to my 22 kindergarten students and my co-teacher. The reaction to these lessons was dramatically positive. My students loved "Mr. Word Wizard" and asked to watch it several times in our extended day program. Richie Haven's beautifully rich voice is calming and my students all sang along (repeatedly) with the song, "Sharing." They also want to sing it at Circle Time in our class. All the students loved to get up and dance with "Madeline Readwrite" again and again.

America's children need more physical activity in and out of school. A video that promotes movement and learning is a real asset to our program and, I believe, an asset to the home environment.

The story of "20,000 Leagues under the Sea" is engaging to the students and I applaud your use of a classic story, and the use of discussion afterwards. (Too many educational videos talk down to children, and quickly lose their interest. By contrast, several parents wanted to know just what this video was that had their children so excited.)

As our students watched "20,000 Leagues under the Sea," I wrote down words and phrases from the story. (The students were simply captivated by the story.) After the program, I flashed each word individually to the students. I was very impressed with the word recall after the video. The majority of our students remembered the words with an initial sounding out of the first letter or two (for some) letters.

[I have 22 kindergarten students. Four of these read at the 3rd Grade level, 3 at the 2nd Grade level, 5 at the 1st Grade level, 5 at the Kindergarten level, and the last 5 are emerging readers with varying degrees of reading and memory difficulties.

I wrote down the following words: professor, see, sea, zoology, monster, flying octopus, underwater, ooh, secrets, oops, everything, leagues, and the phrase, "Don't touch anything."]

My five emerging readers were able to read, "monsters, secrets, flying octopuses and professor." Two of these five struggling students have exhibited clear short-term memory problems. Thus, the program seemed to show a clear assistance to struggling readers.

I believe that ReadSpeak's method of presenting highly contrasted and animated words helps stimulate neural pathways that, in some students, would otherwise not be stimulated. I believe your program can be a wonderful adjunct to reading programs. I plan to share it with other educators.

Sincerely,

Jill Schurman

Jill G. Schurman, Educational Director
Snake River Montessori School