

Muslim Teachers' Association

With the Name of Allah the Merciful
Benefactor, the Merciful Redeemer

Welcome to Muslim Teachers' Association

Patricia Salahuddin, President

As-Salaamu-Alaikum Readers,

As president of the Muslim Teachers' Association (MTA) it is my honor to introduce to you this new and exciting organization. The primary objective of MTA is to serve as an avenue for teachers to network, share ideas, strengthen or acquire skills, and develop instructional strategies, while providing quality education to students. Our mission is to promote and advocate excellence in education on behalf of teachers in Islamic schools as well as develop spiritual and moral character in Muslim students. We envision establishing a unified organization of Muslim teachers in the state of Florida who assist in providing networking and learning experiences for teachers. To accomplish this mission we have established the following goals:

- Form collegial relationships with teachers in Islamic day and weekend schools throughout South Florida.
- Provide professional development for teachers and administrators via networking, support, and training.
- Within five years, develop an education center, which will provide educational materials and support for teachers
- Ensure Muslim students receive the best learning experience possible.

Insha Allah, some of our activities for this year include; training for teachers, best practice workshop and teacher recognition in May. In the past, MTA has hosted two Muslim educational conferences featuring two esteemed Muslim scholars. We pray this newsletter will assist in establishing a long working relationship of support and networking with teachers in our special and unique environment. We invite you to submit articles, instructional strategies, questions and ideas for MTA to this newsletter.

Now that you know who we are and what we represent, we invite you to join us in our efforts. Please contact us at 305-895-8555 or email us at zahirah1@hotmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you. May Allah continue to expand our knowledge and bless our efforts to please Him.

Confused about Phonics?

Article review

If you are confused about the debate over whole language or phonics approach to teaching phonics, help is on the way. Steven Stahl (1992) discussed the principles of effective phonics instructions in an article, "Saying the "p" word: nine guidelines for exemplary phonics instruction," published in the *Reading Journal*. In Stahl's opinion the argument about phonics boils down to a matter of philosophical differences. He suggested that both could be effective instructional methods, and that commonalities can be found in an effective phonics program. The nine exemplary phonics instruction strategies are listed below.

Exemplary phonics instruction:

- (1) Builds on a child's rich text concepts about how print functions.
- (2) Builds on a foundation of phonemic awareness.
- (3) Is clear and direct; avoid confusing students. Let them hear the sounds of letters, also make them aware of the relationship between sounds, letters and reading.
- (4) Is integrated into a total reading program; Integrating phonics instruction into the reading program demonstrates for students the connection of letter-sounds.

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<http://www.readingrockets.org/>

Take the time to visit this website you will find a plethora of information that will assist you with students who are struggling with reading. Reading Rocket also provides

Professional development opportunities

Reading Rockets produces [teleconferences](#) and [free webcasts](#) for teacher professional development. The teleconferences are available live via satellite and offer teachers an opportunity to hear from national experts. The webcasts are available online and can be accessed for free by educators at any time. Developed especially for classroom teachers, administrators, and other education professionals, Reading Rockets' professional development programs feature top education experts. Topics include differentiated instruction, pre-reading skills, English language learning, effective reading programs, parental involvement, and grouping strategies.

Access the website above to see a list of all of our programs and when they are available.



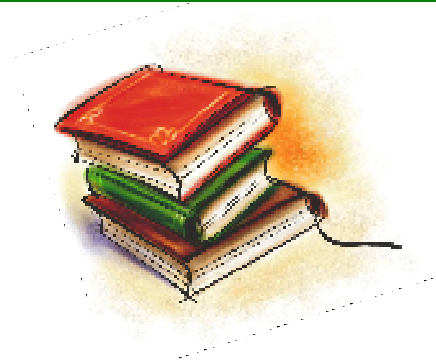
New NSTA Standards

NSTA is launching a new professional development initiative to help teachers and administrators assess strengths of the science instruction being provided to their students.

NSTA's SPiR program will assess a school's complete science instructional program across all grade levels. NSTA-trained and certified SPiR reviewers will work with the school's or district's teachers and administrators

to align the science instruction more closely with state and national science standards for teaching, professional development, assessment, content, and program.

For a downloadable brochure (PDF), visit the NSTA website. Schools interested in learning more about SPiR are invited to fill out the short inquiry form or contact Wendy Binder at wbinder@nsta.org or by calling 703-312-9390.



Reading Resources

Check out the following books and websites. Use them for yourself or in your classroom. Let others know about them.

1. **FORPD** Florida Online Reading – offers free reading online courses for teachers.
2. *The Five Essentials of Organizational Excellence Maximizing School wide student Achievement and Performance* by Lawrence L. Marazza
3. Florida Center for Reading Research www.fcrr.org – features best practices in Reading, Mathematics, and Science
4. *Teacher Talk - The Art of Effective Communication* by Cheli Cerra and Ruth Jacoby Ed. D

The Best Among You

By Patricia Salahuddin

“The best are those who learn the *Qur’an* and teach it.” As a teacher, after reading this hadith one might immediately think that this description is referring to *Qur’an* and Arabic teachers. So, what about those who teach subjects other than *Qur’an* or Arabic? Where does that place us? How can we be among the best? Notice the first part of the statement says, “The best are those from among you who learn the *Qur’an*” Of course, there are no obstacles to learning *Qur’an* as it is clearly stated in surah 54:17,22,32,40 “And indeed, we have made the *Qur’an* easy to remember or understand: Then is there any that will receive admonition?” (Abdallah Yousuf Ali translation). From these ayats in this surah it is clear that we are encouraged to learn the *Qur’an*, therefore, achieving the first step is possible. However, it is the second part, (“... and teach it.”), that requires reflection. How do we teach *Qur’an* when our discipline is science, language arts, math, etc.? How can we achieve the second part of this hadith?

Since Allah created all knowledge and disciplines, and the *Qur’an* is the source for every aspect of human life, then we should be able to “teach it [*Qur’an*] regardless of the subject area or discipline. So, how do we do it? “How do I, the language arts teacher strive to be among the best by teaching the *Qur’an*?” Think of the *Qur’an* in a broad perspective; think of the lessons and the essence of the *Qur’an*. Sometimes we think of teaching the *Qur’an* as memorization and tajweed, but it entails much more than that. Viewing the *Qur’an* in the broader perspective, we can see where our subject area or discipline can fit quite comfortably within the lessons and essence of the *Qur’an*. For example, when teaching language arts and the story or essay has a theme, find an ayat in the *Qur’an* that will address that theme. Or perhaps, there is a story or parable in the *Qur’an* that embodies the same theme. Likewise, if you are teaching an elementary language arts lesson and the topic is friend, remind the students of the person who Allah considered “His friend” and explain why. In addition to other benefits, bringing the knowledge of the *Qur’an* to students

in this manner will help them cultivate a lasting love for it, as well as see the relevancy of the *Qur’an* in their contemporary lives.

These few examples from the language arts discipline have only scratched the surface of the world of possibilities. For that reason, I am asking you to send a sample lesson, an idea, or project that demonstrates your infusion of *Qur’an* in your discipline. We will create a canon of ideas and examples of teaching *Qur’an* through various subject areas. I look forward to hearing from you. Send lessons to zahrah1@hotmail.com

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- (5) Phonics should not be taught in isolation nor should it dominate reading instructions.
- (6) Focuses on reading words, not learning rules.
- (7) May include onsets and rimes; dividing words into syllabus before the vowel and syllabus after the vowel help students develop decoding skills.
- (8) May include invented spelling practice; research is minimum on this topic, but encouraging journal writing using invented spelling can not hurt, on the contrary, it may help.
- (9) Develops independent word recognition strategies, focusing attention on the internal structure of words.
- (10) Develops automatic word recognition skills so that students can devote their attention to comprehension, not words; phonics instruction should not extend beyond second grade. The purpose of phonics is to assist students in automatic word recognition in order to comprehend what they are reading.

According to Stahl, the best programs for teaching phonics integrate phonics into the regular reading program making it relevant to the reading and writing of actual text. Moreover, effective reading programs are based on and build upon students' experience with texts.

To read the complete article here is the information: Stahl, S. (1992). Saying the “p” word: nine guidelines for exemplary phonics instruction. *The*