

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

STECK-VAUGHN *READ ON!* ACCELERATES READING GAINS FOR STRUGGLING HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

New Software Program Focuses on Core Reading Strategies for Building Vocabulary, Comprehension, Fluency and Critical Thinking Skills

AUSTIN, TX --February 21, 2006— Steck-Vaughn *Read On!*, a computer-assisted reading intervention program, enables adolescent and adult learners—even those at foundational levels—to achieve as much as two years of sustained reading progress in a single year. The new literacy-building solution, which evolved from the Steck-Vaughn *Learning 100 System*, is based on scientific research and years of proven classroom success.

With new content, engaging graphics and an up-to-date interface, *Read On!* is designed to motivate today's adolescents and young adults. The underlying pedagogical model, however, with its 40-year record of success and commitment to continual field testing and enhancements in the remediation of non-literate and low-performing learners, remains unchanged.

“Struggling middle school and high school readers often lack the fluency, vocabulary and comprehension strategies they need in subject areas such as math, science and history,” said Tim McEwen, president of Harcourt Achieve. “*Read On!* provides explicit, self-directed instruction that targets each student's individual strengths and weaknesses. We designed this system to be affordable, allow quick and easy school implementation, accommodate existing systems and, most importantly, provide easy access and quick results.”

The No Child Left Behind mandate, which initially focused on grades 1-3, has extended its accountability requirements to secondary schools. Congress is currently debating comprehensive high school reform in two key bills: the Pathways for All Students to Success (PASS) Act, and the Graduation for All Act. Both of these measures recommend funding and guidance for adolescent literacy programs through the U.S. Department of Education to help at-risk high school students.

According to Reading Next, the 2004 Carnegie Corporation report on middle and high school literacy, more than eight million students in grades 4-12 are struggling readers. Every school day, more than three thousand students drop out of high school—often because they lack the reading comprehension skills to keep up with a high school curriculum that is becoming

increasingly complex and content-rich. In today's global economy, there are few opportunities for workers without a high school diploma to achieve economic stability and a middle-class standard of living.

No Adolescent Left Behind

The Reading Next report contains several recommendations for improving high school literacy, including direct and explicit comprehension instruction, self-directed learning, the use of diverse texts, inclusion of a technology component, writing practice, ongoing formative assessment of students and extended time for literacy. The new *Read On!* software aligns to these recommendations.

With more reading levels than any other program and more than 1,000 hours of explicit, systematic instruction, *Read On!* supports both direct instruction and independent study. The incremental, scaffolded approach engages students, makes them feel successful and motivates them to continue.

There is no limit to the number of students in the program, nor are there additional licensing fees for adding new learners. The scalable program's easy-to-use, quick startup features reduce the need for special training of instructors.

Read On!'s learning management system initially performs diagnostic tests to place each learner at the appropriate level. As students work, proven reading strategies help them to build vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and critical thinking skills. Ongoing assessment embedded in the program constantly monitors learners' progress and adjusts instruction to meet their needs. To accelerate mastery, learners focus only on the skills they need.

The complete *Read On!* software system includes reading instruction, writing practice and assessment at reading levels from Foundational to 10.5; a teacher's manual, and six-packs of high-interest *Read On! Go Books* to reinforce vocabulary and comprehension skills. The program includes 225 themes that resonate with adolescents and young adults — about doing the right thing or making hard choices.

The system is available for LAN (Local Area Network) and WAN (Wide Area Network) configurations with 24/7 reliable tech support. Accessible from classroom, library, reading lab or computer lab, the flexible program does not require special classroom arrangements or rigid time slots. Learners work at their own pace and determine their own progress. After missing a day or two of instruction, absentees can catch up quickly.

Read On! may be purchased as a complete package with 10 program levels, or as individual program levels, which range from RA (Foundational) to IA (10.5). The cost of a complete package running on a LAN is \$36,500. Maintenance agreements are available for \$3,000 a year.

Proven Results

Learning 100, the direct predecessor of *Read On!*, is based on the principle that through repetition, students have a better chance for success and skill mastery. Operating on this cognitive concept, *Read On!* builds repetition into each lesson through frequent encounters of the

core vocabulary words in differing contexts. Students who do not master lesson skills are “recycled” to the same skill in a lesson at a lower reading level.

The instructional effectiveness of the *Learning 100* program provides a solid foundation for evaluating the efficacy of *Read On!* Between 2000 and 2005, struggling readers from seventh to eleventh grade in Kentucky, Louisiana, Hawaii and other sites used *Learning 100*. Analyses of student reading achievement as measured by various assessments (STAR, DRA, TABE) found that the program promoted reading growth of 1.2 grade levels or more. Growth in reading achievement occurred across all grade levels and for different student populations, including English language learners, those in regular education, and those in special education.

Copies of *Read On!* research reports are available at: www.SteckVaughn.com/ReadOnResearch. For more program information about *Read On!* please call the *Read On!* information hotline at 800-833-3546 x2753 or visit <http://SteckVaughn.com/ReadOn>.

About Harcourt Achieve

Harcourt Achieve produces learning solutions and content that fundamentally and positively change the lives of young and adult learners. Published under the Rigby, Saxon and Steck-Vaughn imprints, its products are based on a developmental philosophy that assesses learners’ skills, matches them to appropriate content and accelerates them to meet and exceed expectations.

The Steck-Vaughn imprint offers easy-to-use, innovative learning solutions that accelerate content-area knowledge, reading skills, and preparation for standards-based tests, allowing learners to meet and exceed expectations

Harcourt Achieve is part of Harcourt Education, a global education provider serving students and teachers in Pre-K through grade 12, adult learners and readers of all ages. The Harcourt Education companies are Harcourt School Publishers; Holt, Rinehart and Winston; Harcourt Achieve; Harcourt Assessment; Classroom Connect; Harcourt Religion Publishers; Harcourt Trade Publishers; Greenwood/Heinemann and Heinemann Global Library. For more information, please visit www.harcourt.com.

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