

June 2006 Press Release

Parents Initiate Spanish Version of My Reading Coach™ as the Literacy Program of Choice

Ocotillo Elementary School Reinforces Same Language Skills at Home by Enabling Parents of English Language Learners (ELL) to Learn English

MindPlay (www.mindplay.com), providing innovative technology for academic success, today announced My Reading Coach™ (MRC) with Spanish add-on capabilities. It is fast becoming the family literacy program of choice with parents at Ocotillo Elementary School. My Reading Coach educational software has been used as a reading intervention program for students at Ocotillo since the first pilot study began at the school in 2000. The dramatic results observed in the improvement of students' reading skills, particularly those who are English Language Learner (ELL) students, generated interest among parents also desiring to learn English.

As a Title 1 school, Ocotillo is required to allocate a percentage of its budget toward family literacy and parent volunteer programs. Several other literacy programs have been initiated over time, but none have been overly successful. Parents are certainly willing to learn. However, the timing and availability of the classes often conflicted with parents' work schedules or after school care of the children. Recognizing the value of the MRC technology and freedom of learning it offers, Ocotillo faculty successfully eliminated a main reason that family literacy programs fail in their district. By granting access to the MRC program on a couple of designated workstations in the computer lab throughout the school day, parents now have the ability to learn English on their own time schedule.

"Parents began asking permission to use the My Reading Coach program during school hours and our staff viewed it as an effective use of time, money, space and personnel for the purpose of achieving family literacy" said Steve Price, Principal of Ocotillo Elementary School. "I believe other schools and districts faced with similar challenges in their family literacy programs would greatly benefit from using the My Reading Coach program as a solution," he added.

The MindPlay mission is to develop, publish and distribute cost-effective learning tools that support individual growth and skill development. Recognizing the needs of many ELL students, the company collaborated with Ocotillo staff to create the Spanish version of its My Reading Coach program. Michelle Pompa, an Ocotillo teacher with an incredible proficiency for speaking both English and Spanish with native pronunciation of each language became the voice and face of the instructor in the Spanish version. The Spanish version of MRC gives schools two options for learners using the program. Option one offers full instruction of each lesson, including the directions and feedback, in Spanish with Pompa giving only the English pronunciation of the words and grammar. On the other hand, option two provides only directions on the use of the program and feedback throughout the lessons to the students in their native Spanish language. Of course the English only version of the MRC program is also available to students when they eventually become ready for the transition.