Presentation to Parents and Teachers

by
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edited by
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Editor's note, 8-19-2007. Dr. John R. Malone does not remember who wrote this script, but he is sure it was either Dr. Margaret Ratz or him. Their philosophical perspective was so close, I feel confident in giving credit to both. The original script was undated, but we know that from the beginning parents, teachers and administrators were required to learn Unifon so they could help the children under their charge when required. (Substitute teachers also had to read Unifon.) I have taken the liberty to update the alphabet to characters approved by Dr. Malone in 2005.

PARENTS AND TEACHERS:

We are about to introduce your most precious possessions—your children—to English reading and writing by means of an isopmorphic rendering of our spoken language called Unifon.

- Each letters always equals the same one sound.
- There are no silent letters.
- There are no double letters.
- There are 40 letters, because we use 40 sounds!

First a word about Unifon. The original alphabetic writing idea, as first propounded by the Greeks (after simpler, less spohisticated writing systems by the Phoenicians and other Semitic peoples) was to represent each disctinct sound of the language with a single, unique letter. Such sounds or phonemes are found in all languages from as few as 15 or 16 in Hawaiian and other Polynesian tongues, to 48 in Sanscrit and 44 in many American Indian languages. Unifon is an expanded version of the 26-letter Roman-English alphabet so that it can represent in a one-to-one fashion the 40 sounds of standard American English. There are 16 vowel letters all related in form to the present 5 Roman vowel letters (a,e,i,o and u) and 24 consonant letters related to the 17 consonants we use now. In Unifon the letters c, q and x are not used since their sounds are spelled by less ambiguous characters already. (These three letters are held aside, available for spelling other languages for which there may not be an adequate letter in the 40 basic Unifon symbol set.) Unifon was developed more than 50 years ago for teaching English reading and speech to the young, to adult illiterates, and to those unfamiliar with the English language. It was simultaneously developed for a number of technical applications, such as ready conversion to digital symbols in computer-based devices, and for synthetic speech and sepeech recognition purposes, where a rigorous alpuhabet is required. Unifon has been used widely for all of these purposes from one coast of America to the other.

We now intend to extend Unifon to the entire corpus of the English-based word stock of the world, more than a million words, as a comon diacritical system to replace the non-

standardized, over-elaborate systems found in current dictionaries. This secondary or self-pronouncing system places English on the same basis as other rigorously spelled languages like Spanish and Japanese, thus permitting the more rapid acquisition of English reading and speech. The consequence of expanding Unifon to cover the entire range of English verbiage is that English reading and writing is placed on the same basis as mathematical numbers and symbols, where the very act of reading them trains the user to learn them through direct stimulus-response reinforcement. Out of this there develops, almost automatically, a market for devices and media using such an alphabet.

Some have called Unifon "training wheels for reading" and that's what it really is. Unifon will be used for a few weeks or perhaps a few months, but during this time your child will discover there is a great similarity between Unifon and what he sees on TV screens, in comics, or road signs, and on cereal boxes. Soon he finds with amusement that he or she can read the "old people's alphabet" as easily as he can read and write in Unifon. One day he will shed Unifon, just as he now asks you to take off his bike training wheels and off he goes, years ahead of kids who learned the hard ways: formal phonics or look-say.

Unifon is phonics without rules or exceptions—just like Hindu-Arabic numbers. And speaking of numbers, did you ever try to multiply with Roman numerals? Just look at this problem:

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          MCMXVI
Multiply by  MCV
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Do it without converting to Arabics. That's not as bad as trying to learn English reading and writing with an old 26-letter Roman alphabet whin you are speaking a modern 40-sound English language.

Actually, during the past 2,000 years we have in fact added a few letters to the 22-letter Roman alphabet—but not nearly enough! The Romans were already short at least 5 letters for Latin! In the 1,000 years since King Alfred first wrote English we should have added about 18 letters to the basic Roman alpabet, but we never got around to it for a variety of reasons.

Isomorphic, or single-sound, letters are self-teaching or reinforcing, much like modern Spanish or Arabic numbers are. Each time you see a letter and sound it, it strengthens the memory because the sound for the letter form is always the same—identical. So reading a story in Unifon with a finger pointing to each letter literally teaches the sounds and words as numbers do—no rules, no exceptions, no silent or sign letters. It is as simple as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.

In the next few minutes we are going to teach each of you present here, parent or teacher, to read Unifon. When you leave here you will be a changed parent or teacher, who can read English two ways—in traditional and in Unifon. Let's now take our language apart and put it into new clothes. Our language has long since outgrown its old garb.

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DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING BY DRAWING THE LETTERS ON THE BOARD.

First the vowels, or throat sounds:

A, E, I, O, U	Don’t these look familiar? They are the short vowel sounds.
Δ, Ɇ, ⊥, Ω, Ū	These are the long vowel sounds. Note the similar shapes. Note the long horizontal line to distinguish the shapes.
Λ, Ʀ, Φ, Ọ, Ȯ, U̲	The odd vowels. Note that we need 16 total vowel signs.

Now we must address the consonant letters; “con-sonant” is Latin for “sounded with vowels,” thus pointing out the importance of vowel sounds to any language. We need 24 letters to catch those 24 sounds we call consonants.

17 of these letters are nearly always used for the same sounds, and we have kept those: B, D, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, P, R, S, T, V, W, Y, Ƶ. (A cross on the Z symbol helps children to distinguish that sign from a badly drawn number 2.)

The other new characters total six: Ȼ, Ꞥ, Ꞩ, ħ, Ⱶ, Σ.

UNDERLINE THE SIX ALTERED CONSONANTS

I am going to pass out a famous 3-minute speech given by Abraham Lincoln. The first person in the first row will read the first sentence—standing, please. No helping, please!

Now we shall progressively read each sentence. When we have done this I have some more material for you to work on.

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Now let each person go to the board and write his or her name in Unifon, and then compose a 10-word sentence in Unifon. You may then sit down and see if you can read the material each of your friends has written. When you are all able to stand and read all of the material, we will close out this session.

CALL ON EACH PERSON SUCCESSIVELY AND HELP IF NEEDED.

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In closing, now that you are all fluent in two versions of English let’s review a bit and peer into the future a bit.

<u>What else is Unifon good for?</u>

Besides its use in elementary schools and with adult illiterates, Unifon's second biggest use is for teaching spoken English to non-English speaking communities—Hispanics, Asians, et al.

The next largest application is Unifon's use for machine and computer handling of the spoken Englesh language, so that such devices as dictatable typewriters, audio-operated "memo writers" for telephones, fully scannable versions can be used in place of bar codes or for writing material for the blind which can be readily scanned directly into speech with speech synthesizers. Unifon can be and has been used for the keyboards of speech synthesizers for those who have lost their voices.

Summary of Unifon applications

1. Upgrading public schools by 2 to 4 years.
2. Teaching Hispanics to speak and read English.
3. Teaching English and Spanish-speaking adults to read English.
4. Teaching illiterates in prison to read and to speak English properly.
5. English instruction overseas.
6. Improving, by orders of magnitude, teaching of the deaf.
7. Producing far simpler systems for reading to the blind.
8. Upgrading the education of elementary school teachers.
9. Teaching second and third languages in American schools.
10. Accelerating the use of English as a medium of artificial inctelligence.

Available Supporting Information:

1. Lists of schools and school systems which have tested Unifon formally.
2. Lists of Foundations which have placed more that $2,000,000 in support of Unifon tests; reports of results.
3. Lists of companies which have provided large amounts of resources in support.
4. Journals, books and other publications which have published articles about Unifon.