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Robert Gallucci

President

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

140 S. Dearborn Street

Chicago, IL 60603-5285

Dear Mr. Gallucci,

Although I have been called a genius for having created the simplest, easiest, and most effective way of teaching children to read English, and have not been recognized by the education establishment for having done so, I am writing to the MacArthur Foundation for its much-valued recognition.

I know that my reading program, Alpha-Phonics, could solve America's reading problem in very short order if adopted by our schools. It has already been used since the 1980s by thousands of parents to teach their children to read at home with great success. Indeed, this program has been used by several devoted teachers who constantly sing its praises as their students achieve incredible success in reading, writing, and spelling. I receive reports from these teachers almost on a daily basis via email, with samples of their first graders' beautiful handwriting. One of these teachers thinks that Alpha-Phonics ought to be in the Smithsonian Institution.

At age 84, my reward for achieving this has been the satisfaction of knowing that thousands of young Americans have become literate human beings who will be able to lead lives of creativity and enjoyment because of their ability to read the great literature of the world and contribute to our society's productiveness.

In November 2007, the National Endowment for the Arts released its very pessimistic survey of American literacy, *Reading at Risk*. According to the Report, the number of 17-year-olds who never read for pleasure increased from 9 percent in 1984 to 19 percent in 2004. About half of Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 never read books for pleasure.

Endowment Chairman Dana Gioia stated: "This is a massive social problem. We are losing the majority of the new generation. They will not achieve anything close to their potential because of poor reading." The survey found that only a third of high school seniors read at a proficient level. "And proficiency is not a high standard," said Gioia. "We're not asking them to be able to read Proust in the original. We're talking about reading the daily newspaper."

I have spent the last thirty years as an independent scholar and writer doing whatever I can to improve the literacy of the American people. I have taught in the public schools as a substitute, taught full time in a private school for children with learning and behavioral problems, and have tutored privately. So I know the effectiveness of the my teaching methods.

We know that children in China, South Korea, Japan, and India are being taught to read and speak English because of the great advantage such skills will give them in this highly competitive world economy. That is why it is so deplorable to have American children failing to learn to read their own native language.

A very simple, cost effective way for America to regain the high standard of literacy it once had would be for the public schools to adopt Alpha-Phonics as the basic way to teach reading. An award from the MacArthur Foundation would provide the means whereby my work could be made known to state legislatures and local school boards so that their local schools could make the needed changes.

I would be glad to send you a copy of Alpha-Phonics along with several articles I've written on the reading problem should you be interested in learning more about my work.

In any case, I appreciate whatever consideration you may give my request.

Sincerely yours,

Samuel L. Blumenfeld