

Who Developed Speed Reading?

The world's most famous speed reading course is Reading Dynamics developed by Evelyn Wood. It's famous for teaching people to read faster, or speed reading as she called it. Her live course was the first known course that taught students to read faster and it started with about 25 hours of training to double your reading speed.

Over time the system was made available all over the world. These well practiced techniques teach students to read more rapidly, and also comprehend more of what they are reading. These techniques have proven to be repeatedly effective with all ages in many countries around the world.

There are many stories about how Evelyn Wood first learned speed read. My personal favorite was that she, as a child, was fishing at a nearby lake in Utah where she was living. To Evelyn, fishing was a relaxing necessity, but her mind was always active.

When fishing, she brought a book to read until she saw that the float on the fishing line was bobbing. Then she'd reel in the fish. It was said that she read with the sun at her back for natural light, and used her index finger on her dominant hand to track under the words she were reading.

Whenever a fish bit, she just put down the book and started fishing again. That's how it all started.

As she got older, she went to the University of Utah where one professor read and graded her 80-page research paper in just ten minutes. This came to 2,500 words per minute. He didn't know how to tell his student what made it so he could read fast, nor how he developed his ability. He just read and could understand very quickly and efficiently.

Challenged by the potential to read that fast, Evelyn researched and studied fast readers to see if she could improve her reading speed and comprehension too. Then, she began to teach students herself, she figured out that it could be beneficial to them if she passed her skills on.

The desire to read faster and comprehend more is universal. People all over the world were fascinated in, what turned out to be, Evelyn's own techniques for speed reading and comprehension. As she expanded her research and investigation of speed reading, she found people from different parts of the world reading from 1,500 to 6,000 words per minute. All had an impressive level of comprehension proven by their knack for recalling specifics of the text.

She catalogued what each of them did to read faster and she found that each had their own traits and all of them had multiple traits in common with the others. These included:

1. Words were seen, and read, in groups.
2. Readers identified patterns and key words when they scanned text, quickly identifying the purpose and theme behind the writings.
3. Readers also sped up or slowed down with the simplicity or complexity of the reading materials. This permitted them control of levels of comprehension.

Based on this the Evelyn Wood program was developed. Techniques were developed and tested.

In 1959, she was proficient and prepared enough to develop a system that would teach others to speed read as well. Later that year, she opened the Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics Institute in Washington DC. John F. Kennedy was the first president to have his White House staff trained by the Evelyn Wood technique.

Today, the Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics Institute no longer exists in the US. The rights were sold off to various publishers to market as courses, self-taught, and the remaining Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics teachers have private instructional practices. Some teachers are still healthy enough in their mid 60s and 70s to teach the original technique.

Today, the few remaining teachers have departed their secrets to others, who have put the courses online for you to study. Though, you might learn from itinerant speed reading instructors who often teach classes at community colleges, or private corporations throughout the US and beyond. In New Zealand, Australia, and Western Europe, some offices of the original Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics have survived the creator who passed on over 20 years ago.

Since the 1990s, courses became available in audio, video VCR, and later, DVD, adding a convenience that Evelyn could never have even dreamed of when she first taught. Faster reading with greater comprehension can be reached by students around the world by using the system that Evelyn

Wood invented while fishing one sunny day. To find Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics courses, check with www.speedread.org, they carry the audio and video versions to help you double your reading speed and achieve far greater.

About the Author

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