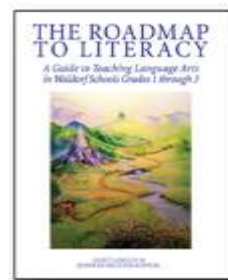


## The Seven Core Tenets of *The Roadmap to Literacy* Jennifer Miltzer-Kopperl, author



Schools are adopting *The Roadmap to Literacy* (Langley and Miltzer-Kopperl 2018); however, some trainings contain misinformation. The seven core tenets of *The Roadmap to Literacy* help teachers and schools adopt the *Roadmap* program and avoid things that undermine success.

### 1. Strive to get up to 95% of students reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

Waldorf schools have experienced failure rates of one third to one half of each class (Langley and Miltzer-Kopperl 2018, 2). This is unacceptable. Schools that teach reading well get up to 95-98% of students reading at grade level (Langley and Miltzer-Kopperl 2018, 483).

Training that justifies a failure rate of one third violates *The Roadmap to Literacy*.

### 2. Teach to the students' phase(s) of learning to read and spell, not to their grade level.

Teaching a set curriculum by grade is the number one thing teachers are doing wrong when they use *The Roadmap to Literacy* (Miltzer-Kopperl 2022, vii). The phases of learning to read and spell (pictured below) provide a roadmap to literacy. *Roadmap* states, "Always teach to your students' phases, not their grade level" (Langley and Miltzer-Kopperl 2018, 31).



Training that contains a set curriculum by grade violates *The Roadmap to Literacy*.

### 3. Schedule practice during main lesson, not circle and/or an extended opening.

Practice is how students create the neural pathways necessary for literacy (Langley and Miltzer-Kopperl 2018, 8-9). Therefore, *Roadmap* recommends 20-40 minutes of practice in main lesson. That time comes from skipping circle and limiting opening to 12-15 minutes (Langley and Miltzer-Kopperl 2018, 56-58, 61). Spending an additional 10 minutes a day on opening is the equivalent of losing one 50-minute practice class every week. In one year, students lose the equivalent of 30 academic practice classes or six full weeks of daily practice classes. Over three years, students lose the equivalent of 4 ½ months of daily academic practice classes.

Training that includes circle or an extended opening violates *The Roadmap to Literacy*.

#### **4. Continue to teach literacy during off blocks: do not put literacy instruction to sleep.**

Waldorf education was designed for the German language. It takes English speaking students longer to learn to read than their German speaking peers because written English is less phonetically regular than written German (Langley and Militzer-Kopperl 2018, 14). Continue to teach literacy during the off blocks in (daily) academic practice classes. English is not German.

#### **5. Provide direct instruction in literacy capacities as well as literacy skills.**

Phonemic awareness, symbol imagery, and concept imagery (pictured below) are key to getting students to read and spell at grade level. Students need to develop these capacities (sensory-cognitive functions) to master reading/spelling skills (Langley and Militzer-Kopperl 2018, 34-37).



Training that omits direct instruction in these capacities violates *The Roadmap to Literacy*.

#### **6. Differentiate Instruction to meet all students' needs.**

Some students need more instruction and/or practice than others. Differentiate instruction to make sure all students achieve benchmarks (standards) for each grade.

Training that gives all students the same instruction violates *The Roadmap to Literacy*.

#### **7. Assess.**

Make sure students have mastered the skills and capacities of one phase before moving to the next. *The Roadmap to Literacy* contains an entire section on assessment for this very purpose.

One assessment tool that *The Roadmap to Literacy* recommends is DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). Teachers who learn to use it to inform instruction can get up to 95% (or more) of students reading at grade level (Langley and Militzer-Kopperl 2018, 483). I modified DIBELS for off-grade use in Waldorf schools in *The Roadmap to Literacy: Renewal of Literacy® Edition* to make it easier (and more effective) for Waldorf teachers and schools to use.

Training that disparages DIBELS violates *The Roadmap to Literacy*.

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## Conclusion

If you choose to violate the core tenets of *The Roadmap to Literacy*, do not claim that you are using *The Roadmap to Literacy*. Practices that violate the seven core tenets of *The Roadmap to Literacy* undermine the efficacy of the program.

There is a lot of misinformation out there. I wrote a new edition of *The Roadmap to Literacy* and created on-demand courses to help teachers and schools get on track so we can get up to 95% of students reading at grade level by the end of third grade. That way, students and teachers will be ready for the amazing Waldorf subject curriculum that begins in fourth grade (and the sequel *Continuing the Journey to Literacy*). The new edition of *The Roadmap to Literacy*, support courses, and mentoring are pictured below. They are available through Renewal of Literacy®: <https://renewalofliteracy.com/>.

Please join me in renewing literacy—for the twenty-first century and beyond.



## Bibliography

Langley, Janet and Miltzer-Kopperl, Jennifer. *The Roadmap to Literacy: A Guide to Teaching Language Arts in Waldorf Schools Grades 1 through 3*. Maitland, FL: Mill City Press, 2018.

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