

# How We Developed Our Software

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## The rationale behind the software.

Many people have asked about LocuTour Multimedia and how we got started. I am a Speech-Language Pathologist and my brother John Scarry is a wizard. I asked the wizard if he could “poof” the four file drawers stuffed with software ideas into games. He wasn’t able to poof them, but we were able to turn twenty-some years of notes into some pretty awesome games. Here are the stories of how some of the games were created.

Elizabeth Price and I were both students of Barbara Hodson at San Diego State (at different times, we didn’t know each other yet). We loved Phonology and used the concepts with our clients after we were out of school. We knew that the concepts were solid and wanted to make a computer game to provide the auditory stimuli and one that was fun. We created Phonology based on theoretical as well as clinical practice.

Spanish Phonology was developed because our friend and researcher, Kathi Kohnert found that there needs to be stimulation in the child’s native language for phonological processes to be developed in that language. There was not a generalization of phonology from one language to another.

The Articulation series began as a single CD but by the time we wrote down all the words, categories and features that should be in a good program, we ran out of room on the CD. There are over 2,000 different words on the three CD’s. We don’t know how many children need to produce all of those words, but we did know that we didn’t want the Speech-Language Pathologist to get bored during therapy time. I know I appreciate variety in my day. Besides, I wasn’t just using Articulation for speech practice, I used it for vocabulary development, apraxia, anomia, spelling, reading, and comprehension.

Train Time came from my love of working with children with Autism. I wanted to reach these children and thought, “What will help me get their attention?” Trains came to mind. I figured that once I had their attention I could teach them to read and follow directions. The children themselves named the game; they would exclaim as they came into the office, “It’s train time, it’s train time!” Never had too much trouble convincing them to sit down and get to work.

Attention and Memory: Volume I was the first program I wrote. It was designed because there were two very special people in my life that incurred head injuries at just about the same time. One was Phillip, a dear five-year-old with an open head injury due to a 30 foot fall, and the other, my son Dane. Dane’s multiple concussions all occurred before the age of 6. He was having difficulty attending in the classroom and learning to read. Phillip had some pretty serious occipital lobe damage and was struggling with reading and math. By this time I had worked with Pat Lindamood for over 7 years and incorporated all my training into teaching these boys to read. I knew I wasn’t getting the kind of sustained and shifting attention skills that I needed and worked with a neuropsychologist to develop an attention training program. I combined the auditory, visual, attention and memory aspects of what was working with these boys into the program that is now called Attention and Memory. I am thrilled to say that both boys are happy, well adjusted 14 year-olds and are thriving!

My passion is teaching. I want to have every third grader in the United States able to read English proficiently. The opportunities and the advancements children can make are unlimited when they can read. I have also seen the flip side of what happens when a child cannot read, and does not understand language well enough to connect cause and effect.

I have been working in a “forensic facility” for over 15 years. In this instance “forensic” means “mentally ill offenders.” You probably aren’t real surprised to find out that most every one of these criminals have histories of head injuries, prenatal substance exposure, illiteracy and/or substance abuse. Getting these men literate is a much more difficult job than getting the third grader that is falling behind to become literate.

We must work together to teach children to read. We know that children have different learning styles, but we also know that certain brain processes must occur before reading is possible. The concepts of phonemic awareness, syllable blending, visual memory, re-auditorization are not new. We do know that we must get this auditory processing work done early to get rapid, accurate decoding skills. Once the decoding skills are proficient we must be sure that the children comprehend what they read.

Literacy is my contribution to global literacy. Our next several projects will focus on Numeracy and the language of Mathematics. We love to hear from you with suggestions for future projects that we should endeavor upon.

Sincerely,  
Marna Scarry-Larkin