

Research and Outcomes Department

Berlin School District, WI

Students from the Berlin School District in Berlin, Wisconsin, used the Fast ForWord products during the 2003 – 2004 school year. The Berlin School District, a suburban district north of Madison, Wisconsin, serves 1700 students in four schools. Educators from the school district were interested in evaluating the effectiveness of the Fast ForWord products at improving the reading skills of their students. They found that students achieved significant improvements on tests of cognition and early reading abilities after using the products.

The Program Evaluation

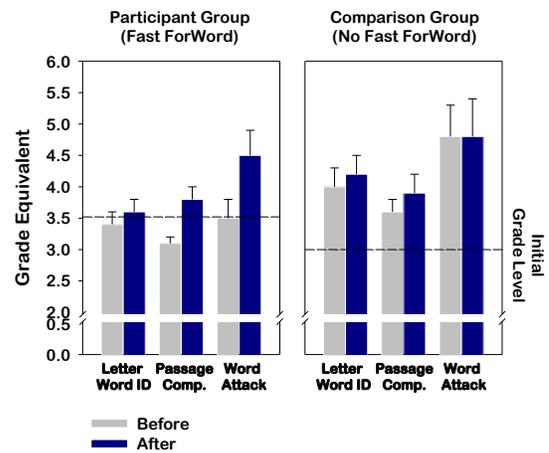
Before and after Fast ForWord participation, students were evaluated with the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, Revised (WJ-R).

The WJ-R is a wide-range, comprehensive set of individually-administered tests with alternate forms for measuring cognitive abilities, scholastic aptitudes, and achievement. Three of the tests administered evaluated reading skills; the fourth one evaluated phonological memory. The three reading skills tests are approved by the Institute for Development of Educational Achievement for assessing early reading skills: Letter/Word Identification and Word Attack are appropriate for assessing phonics, and Passage Comprehension is appropriate for assessing comprehension.

Approach and Methodology

Educators were trained in current and established findings on the neuroscience of how phonemic awareness and the acoustic properties of speech impact rapid development of language and reading skills; methods for assessing potential product participants; the selection of appropriate measures for testing and evaluation; effective implementation techniques; approaches for monitoring student performance; and techniques for measuring the gains students have achieved after they have finished using the product. This training helped ensure successful product implementation.

Improved Early Reading Skills



Standard scores from before and after participation on the Fast ForWord products show that, on average, students made significant improvements in their early reading skills.

Students who used Fast ForWord products achieved significant improvements on measures of Passage Comprehension, Word Attack, and Phonological Memory.

Participation

Fifty-four students participated in this study and had pre- and post-participation data available for analysis. Fifteen of the study participants did not use the Fast ForWord products and served as a comparison group. The school district chose to use the 50-minute protocols which called for students to use the products for 50 minutes per day, 5 days a week for eight to twelve weeks.

Assessment Results

Overall, students who used Fast ForWord products achieved significant improvements on their cognitive and early reading skills.

Before using the products, students in the participant group were, on average, performing at a mid-third grade level. Three months later, they were performing at a low-fourth grade level.

Post hoc analyses were used to evaluate individual subtests. These analyses showed that students who used the Fast ForWord products made significant improvements on three of the four subtests (Passage Comprehension, Word Attack, and Phonological Memory), while the comparison group only achieved significant improvements in Phonological Memory.

Discussion

Cognitive and early reading abilities are critical for all students, impacting their ability to benefit from instruction, follow instructions, and participate in class discussions. Strong linguistic skills also provide a critical foundation for building reading and writing skills.

Scores from before and after participation on the Fast ForWord products showed that, on average, students who used the products demonstrated significant increases in their early reading and cognitive skills as measured by the WJ-R. This suggests that using the Fast ForWord products strengthened the students' foundational skills and helped them benefit more from the classroom curriculum.

**To find out more about this study, and how
Fast ForWord products can benefit students in
your classroom or district, please contact us.**

info@scilearn.com

[1-888-282-7401](tel:1-888-282-7401)

scientificlearning.com

