

## Research and Outcomes Department

### Weymouth Public Schools, MA

The Weymouth Public Schools, a suburban school district 16 miles south of Boston, Massachusetts, serves nearly 7,000 students. During the summer of 2004, a group of students from the district took part in a study of the Fast ForWord products at Thomas Nash Primary School. The students' age ranged from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Most of the students were receiving services for special education and had language, reading, or learning challenges. After using the Fast ForWord products, the students demonstrated significant improvements in their oral language skills.

#### The Program Evaluation

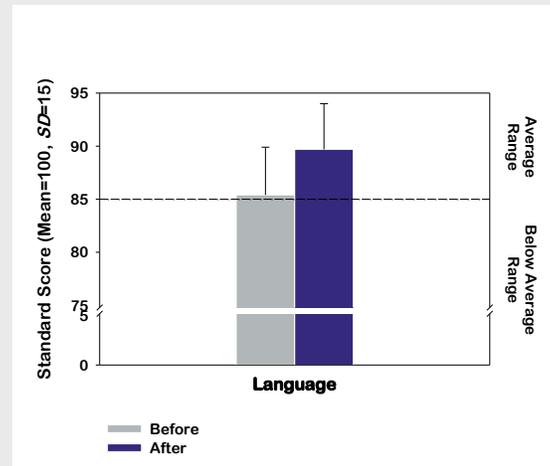
Before and after Fast ForWord participation, school district personnel evaluated all students with the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – 4<sup>th</sup> edition (CELF-4).

The CELF-4 is a comprehensive language test widely used to measure a student's overall oral language ability. It has receptive and expressive components. The subtests that comprise the receptive and expressive components of the CELF-4 vary by age, and can be combined to give the overall oral language score.

#### 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 Oral Language Skills



Students significantly improved their oral language skills after using the Fast ForWord products during a summer school.

*Students who used the Fast ForWord products during summer school significantly improved their oral language skills.*

## Participation

Fifteen students participated in this study and had pre- and post-participation data available for analysis. All the students used the Fast ForWord Language product; five of the students also used the Fast ForWord Language to Reading product.

During their six-week summer school, Thomas Nash Primary School chose to use the 100-Minute Fast ForWord Language Protocol and the 90-Minute Fast ForWord Language to Reading Protocol. These protocols call for students to use the product for 100 or 90 minutes per day, five days a week for four to eight weeks.

## Assessment Results

Overall, at the beginning of the study, the oral language skills of the students in the study were in the low average range,

corresponding to the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile. On average, the students who used the Fast ForWord products showed significant improvements in their oral language skills, improving by one-third of a standard deviation. As a group, the students moved from the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile.

In addition to improvements that could be objectively measured, the families and teachers of many students noticed substantial changes in the students' behavior. For example, the student who had regular meetings with a speech and language therapist, but with limited improvement, began to rapidly gain new language skills. Her parents had previously acted as interpreters, repeating questions for her, but after using Fast ForWord products, she was able to interact with her cousins at a large family gathering without assistance.

## Discussion

Strong cognitive and linguistic skills provide a critical foundation for building reading and writing skills. The Fast ForWord Language and Fast ForWord Language to Reading products build this foundation through development of auditory memory, attention, and sequencing, and by exercising early reading skills including phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

This study demonstrates that students in the Weymouth Public Schools who used the Fast ForWord products significantly improved their oral language skills. These results suggest that using the Fast ForWord products strengthened the students' reading and foundational skills and will allow them to 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.**

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