

Research and Outcomes Department

El Campo Independent School District, TX

El Campo, Texas, is the largest city in Wharton County and is located approximately 70 miles southwest of Houston and 50 miles northeast of Victoria. At the end of the 2004 – 2005 school year, Hutchins Elementary in the El Campo Independent School District chose to use the 30-Minute Protocols of the Fast ForWord Language Basics and Fast ForWord to Reading Prep products and participate in this study.

The students in the study were in the second or third grade and were receiving special education services, were English Language Learners, or were being considered for retention. After Fast ForWord participation, the students, on average, improved one-fifth of a standard deviation, corresponding to gains of three months in reading grade-level, and had significant improvements on measures of early reading and phonological awareness skills.

The Program Evaluation

Before and after Fast ForWord participation, study participants were evaluated with the STAR Reading or the Reading Edge assessments.

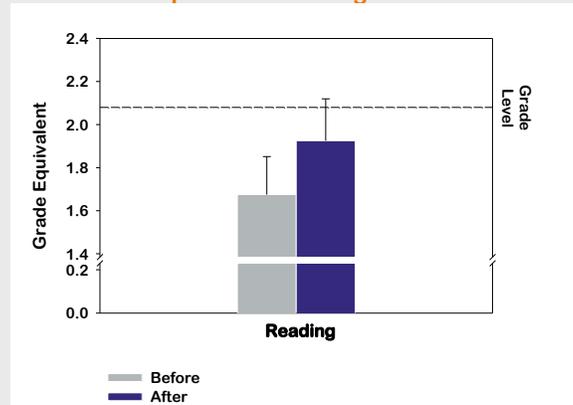
The STAR Reading assessment is a criterion- and norm-referenced test of reading ability. It consists of computer adaptive multiple choice questions and is appropriate for grades 1 through 12.

Reading Edge is a software program for evaluating phonological/early reading skills, including phonological processing, phonological awareness, phonemic decoding, and letter-sound identification. The Reading Edge composite score reflects a student's overall performance on the various phonological and reading tests in Reading Edge taking into account the relative importance of each test in predicting reading ability.

Approach and Methodology

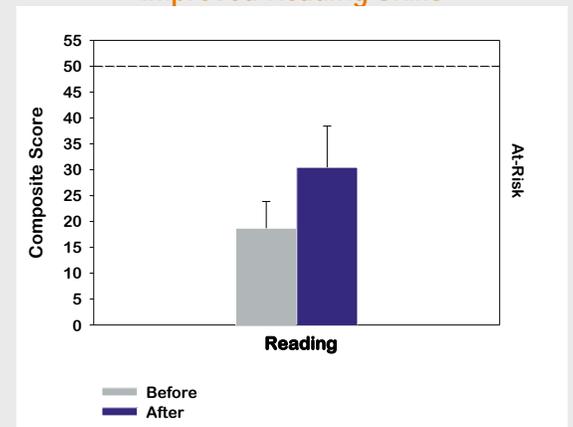
Educators were trained in current and established findings on the neuroscience of how phonemic awareness and the acoustic properties of speech impact rapid development of language and reading skills; methods for assessing potential product

Improved Reading Skills



Students had average gains of three months in reading performance after Fast ForWord use.

Improved Reading Skills



On average, students had significant improvements in overall reading and phonological measures after participating on the Fast ForWord products.

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.

Participation

All 17 study participants used the 30-Minute protocol of the Fast ForWord Language Basics and / or Fast ForWord to Reading Prep products; eleven of the students used both products. The 30-Minute Fast ForWord Language Basics and Fast ForWord to Reading Prep Protocols call for students to use the

products for 30 minutes a day, five days per week.

Assessment Results

Before Fast ForWord use, students had an average NCE of 22.4 on the STAR Reading assessment, which is in the below average range. After Fast ForWord participation, students improved one-fifth of a standard deviation in reading performance, corresponding to a three-month gain in grade-level. Students had an average composite score of 18 on Reading Edge before Fast ForWord participation. After product use, students, on average, made significant improvements and moved closer to their expected reading performance level.

Discussion

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

Towards the end of the 2004 – 2005 school year, second and third grade students used the 30-Minute protocols of the Fast ForWord Language Basics and Fast ForWord to Reading Prep products. On average, students made significant gains in measures of phonological and reading abilities after Fast ForWord use. Students, on average, achieved a gain of three months improvement on the STAR Reading assessment. Taking the students' previous reading skills into account—these students had a grade equivalent reading level of 1.9 with many receiving special education services or at-risk for academic failure—gains of three months after just one month of Fast ForWord product use is remarkable. These findings demonstrate that, within Hutchins Elementary School, an optimal learning environment coupled with a focus on cognitive and early reading skills can help students attain a higher level of reading achievement.

**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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