Fast ForWord®

reading assistant™

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Scientific Learning®

Virginia students show 9 months gain after 4 months of reading intervention

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Implementation Objectives
The 2014-2015 Virginia School Report card revealed that 40% of students in Virginia's public schools were economically disadvantaged, and more than 8,600 were homeless. Faced with rising numbers of students in poverty, the Governor's office has prioritized improving educational success in struggling schools in high poverty communities. To help fulfill this mandate, many Virginia schools are using Scientific Learning's Fast ForWord® and Reading Assistant™ products. This study evaluates the impact of using these interventions to help struggling readers, including those who are economically disadvantaged.

Methodology
Participants were students in Virginia elementary and middle schools whose reading skills were assessed before and after intervention, during the 2014-15 school year. Student skills were assessed with Reading Progress Indicator (RPI), a standardized, computer-based reading test that is correlated with many nationally-normed measures and high-stakes state assessments.

At each school, educators were trained in:
- Current findings on the neuroscience of how phonemic awareness and the acoustic properties of speech impact rapid development of language and reading skills
- Research findings on the importance of guided oral reading for building reading fluency
- Techniques for effective Fast ForWord and Reading Assistant implementation
- Use of MySciLEARN™ reports to monitor student progress

Product Use
All study participants were assigned to work on the Fast ForWord products for 30, 40 or 50 minutes per day, 3 or 5 days per week (roughly half were assigned the 30 minute, 5 day schedule). On average, the students used 2 products and completed 1 product, during 65 days of use. Implementation fidelity was moderate, with students attending 70% of scheduled days and completing 88% of daily protocol minutes. Reading Assistant was also used by 23 study participants, who completed an average of 13 reading selections over 7 hours of use.

Assessment Results
On their initial test, the students' average reading level was 2.3, one and a half years below their average grade level of 3.8. After intervention, their average reading level improved to 3.2.

Virginia Students Exceed Expectations
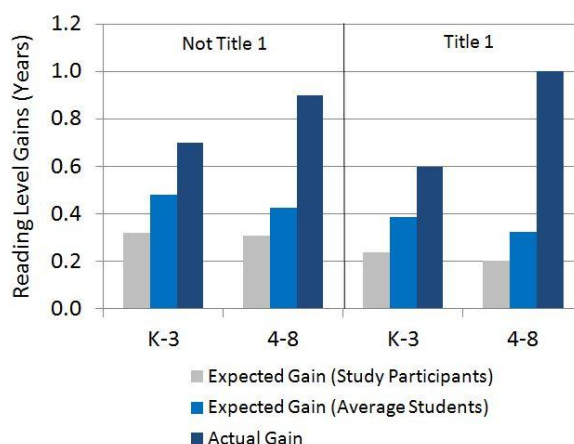
Given their prior learning trajectories, these students were expected to make 2 to 3 months of gain during the 4 months between tests. In fact, they averaged 9 months of gain, far exceeding expectations.

Further analysis looked at the impact across four groups that differed by grade level and economic status (Title 1). All of these groups made statistically significant gains (Not Title 1 / K-3: t(56)=8.57. Not Title 1 / 4-8: t(46)=6.53. Title 1 / K-3: t(19)=5.68. Title 1 / 4-8: t(9)=3.83. All p<0.01).

Educational Gains
The results found in this study support a substantial body of research demonstrating that use of the Fast ForWord and Reading Assistant products results in the strengthening of foundational skills, better positioning students to benefit from the classroom curriculum.

Across grades and economic groups, Virginia students increased their rate of reading growth.