

## Research and Outcomes Department

### Pocatello/Chubbuck School District 25, ID

The Pocatello/Chubbuck School District 25 in Pocatello, Idaho, is an urban district in southeastern Idaho serving 12,000 students. The district has used Fast ForWord products for several years. During the 2003 – 2004 school year, educators from the school district were interested in evaluating the effectiveness of the Fast ForWord products at improving their students' performance on the state assessment. They found that students struggling with reading skills achieved significant improvements on the reading portion of the state achievement test after using the products. Over half the students who were in the "Below Basic" category prior to using Fast ForWord products moving up into "Basic" or "Proficient" category following participation.

#### The Program Evaluation

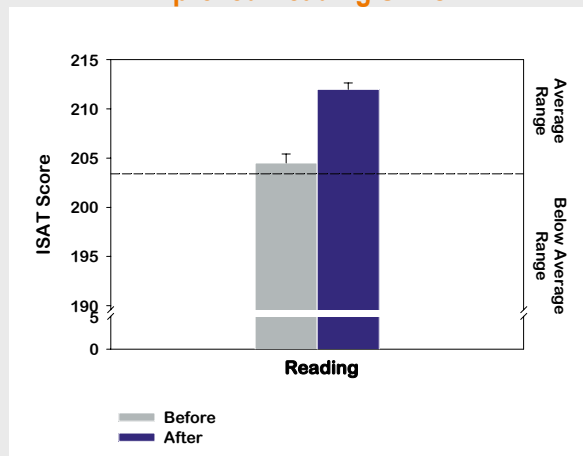
Before and after Fast ForWord participation, students were evaluated with the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT).

The ISAT is a computerized, standards-based state assessment produced by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). It contains multiple choice questions and is appropriate for grades 2 through 10. The test has reading, language arts, and math sections and is offered in the fall and spring of each academic year.

#### 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 Reading Skills



After participation on the Fast ForWord products, the group of 150 students made significant gains on the ISAT. Students who used Fast ForWord products greatly exceeded the average year-over-year gain of 4.1 points achieved by students in comparable grades.

*Students who used Fast ForWord products achieved significant improvements on the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT).*

## Participation

One hundred and fifty students participated in this study. In Spring 2003, school personnel administered the ISAT – the Idaho state assessment. Students then used the Fast ForWord Middle & High School product and/or the Fast ForWord Language to Reading product. In Spring 2004, the state assessment was administered again.

## Assessment Results

Overall, after Fast ForWord product use, students made significant improvements in reading achievement and exceeded the nationwide average increase on the ISAT scale

score for students in comparable grades (7.4 points vs. 4.1 points).

In addition, before using the Fast ForWord products, only 27% of the students were performing in the Basic range on the ISAT with the majority of students (56%) performing in the Below Basic range. After Fast ForWord participation, the percentage of students performing in the Basic range rose to 49% while the percentage in the Below Basic range dropped to 27%. Students reaching the Proficient range (an indication of subject mastery) nearly doubled from 11% to 21% after Fast ForWord use.

## 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 reading achievement as measured by the reading section of the ISAT. The number of students who were in the Basic or Proficient categories doubled, while the number of students in Below Basic dropped by over 50%. 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 visit [www.scilearn.com/resultsreports](http://www.scilearn.com/resultsreports).