

Research and Outcomes Department

Poteau School District, OK

Poteau, Oklahoma is the county seat of Le Flore County and is located 130 miles southeast of Tulsa and 198 miles southeast of Oklahoma City. Poteau Primary, a pre-Kindergarten to second grade school and one of four schools in the district, chose to use the Fast ForWord products during the 2004 – 2005 school year.

After participating on the Fast ForWord products, low-performing second grade students made significant improvements in reading ability, gaining an average of ten months in reading skills in less than six months and increasing their oral reading rate by 57%.

The Program Evaluation

Student reading ability was assessed with the STAR Reading and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) before and after Fast ForWord participation.

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.

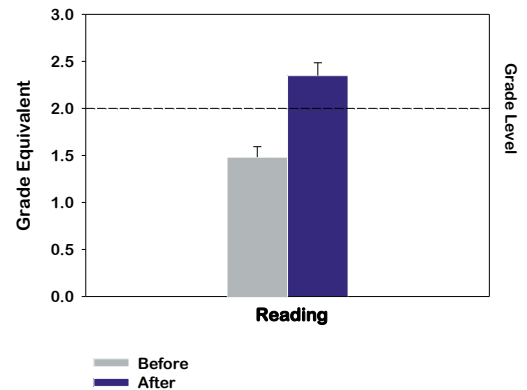
The DIBELS are standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development designed to monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills. Skills assessed range from phonemic awareness to phonics to fluency. The appropriate skills for measuring with the DIBELS vary with the grade of the students. For students in the second grade and beyond, the appropriate measure is Oral Reading Fluency, which is a standardized test of accuracy and fluency.

The Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement, in accordance with the Reading First legislation, recognizes the DIBELS as an appropriate assessment for measuring improvement in the reading skills of children in early elementary school.

Approach and Methodology

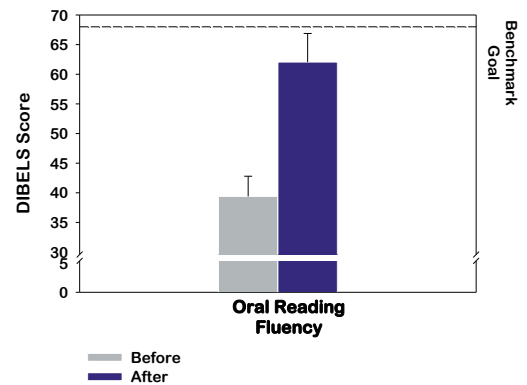
Educators were trained in current and established findings on the neuroscience of how phonemic

Improved Reading Skills



After Fast ForWord participation, students, on average, made gains of ten months in reading ability.

Improved Fluency



On average, students made significant improvements after Fast ForWord use, increasing their reading rate by 57%.

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.

Participation

All 44 students in this study used the Fast ForWord Language product; 15 also used the Fast ForWord Language to Reading product. The Poteau School District chose to use a combination of the 50- and 100-Minute Fast ForWord Language Protocols and the 50-

Minute Fast ForWord Language to Reading Protocol which call for students to use the products for 50 or 100 minutes a day, 5 days per week for four to twelve weeks.

Assessment Results

Students were in the second grade and had an average grade-level of 1.5 before Fast ForWord product use. At the time of post-testing, after approximately less than six months of Fast ForWord participation, the group of students was at a reading grade-level of 2.3, an improvement of ten months. At the start of this study, participants had an Oral Reading Fluency score of 39, which is below the DIBELS benchmark goal. Students, on average, made significant improvements after Fast ForWord participation, achieving a score of 62 which is within the “some risk” range.

Discussion

Language and reading skills 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.

During the 2004 – 2005 school year, second graders in the Poteau School District used the Fast ForWord products and made significant gains in reading ability. Students had average improvements of ten months in reading performance and increased their reading rate by 57%. These findings demonstrate that, within Poteau Primary, an optimal learning environment coupled with a focus on cognitive and early reading skills helped 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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