

Research and Outcomes Department

Joshua Independent School District, TX

The Joshua Independent School District is a suburban district in Texas that serves approximately 4,500 students. During the 2004 – 2005 school year, a group of students in grades two through four at one of their schools, A.G. Elder Elementary School, took part in a study on the Fast ForWord products.

Students made significant gains in academic skills after Fast ForWord use, improving their average reading performance by fifteen months and average math performance by ten months, after seven months of product use. They increased their average reading rate by 44%.

The Program Evaluation

Before and after Fast ForWord participation, all students were evaluated with the STAR Reading and the STAR Math assessments. Most students were also evaluated with the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI).

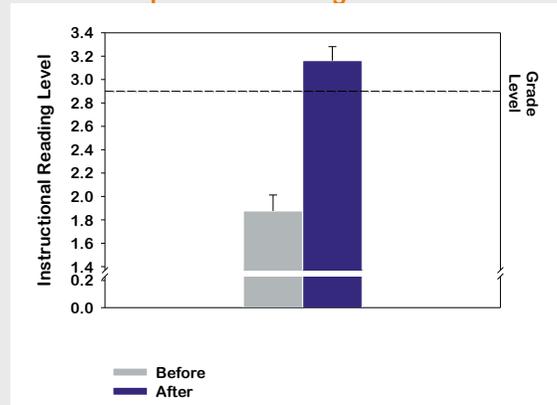
The STAR Reading and STAR Math assessments are criterion- and norm-referenced tests of reading and math ability, respectively. They consist of computer adaptive multiple choice questions and are appropriate for grades 1 through 12.

The TPRI is an individually administered assessment of reading ability designed for grades K-3. It contains a screening section to determine the reading level of a student and an inventory section to assess specific reading skills including phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension. The Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement recognizes the TPRI 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



On average, students were reading at grade-level with at least 80% accuracy after Fast ForWord participation.

Students who used the Fast ForWord products achieved significant improvements on the STAR Reading assessment.

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

One hundred and six students participated in this study and had pre- and post-participation data available for analysis. All participating students used the Fast ForWord Language product. In addition, almost all students used the Fast ForWord Language to Reading product.

The Joshua Independent School District chose to use a combination of the 50-, 75- and 100-Minute Fast ForWord Language Protocols and the 50-Minute Fast ForWord Language to Reading Protocol. These protocols call for

students to use the products for 50, 75 or 100 minutes a day, five days per week, for four to twelve weeks.

Assessment Results

Overall, students who used the Fast ForWord products showed significant improvements in their reading abilities, math abilities, and reading fluency.

At the beginning of the study, participating students had reading skills that were below grade level. After Fast ForWord participation, students made significant improvements in their reading performance, with average gains of fifteen months, and achieved grade-level skills. Students also made significant improvements in their math performance, with average gains of ten months.

Reading fluency also improved significantly. Before Fast ForWord participation, students had an average reading rate of 57 words per minute. On average, students made significant gains after Fast ForWord use, improving their reading rate by 44% to 83 words per minute.

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 Joshua Independent School District who used the Fast ForWord Language and Fast ForWord Language to Reading products made significant improvements in reading and math skills after product use. 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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