

Research and Outcomes Department

Oregon City School District, OH

Located in Oregon, Ohio, the second largest city in Lucas County, the Oregon City School District has seven schools and serves over 3,800 students in pre-Kindergarten to twelfth grade. The four elementary schools in the district chose to use the Fast ForWord products during the 2003 – 2004 school year.

Third and fourth graders from the four elementary schools in the Oregon City School District had their reading achievement evaluated with Ohio state assessments before and after Fast ForWord participation. On average, 69% of the students in this study improved at least one performance level after Fast ForWord use.

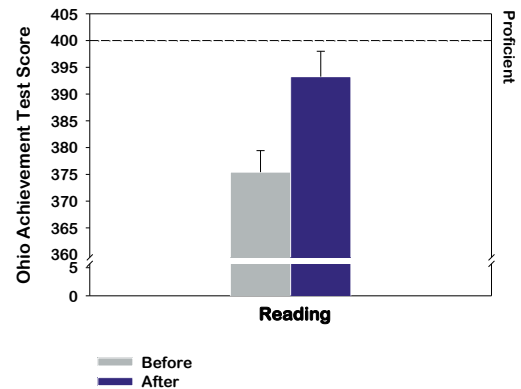
The Program Evaluation

Third graders in Ohio are assessed with the Ohio Achievement Test (OAT), a test of reading ability. Fourth grade students are evaluated with the Ohio Proficiency Test (OPT). Students were assessed in October of 2003 and again five months later in March of 2004.

The tests are criterion-referenced, and compare student performance to Ohio's selected curriculum. The Ohio Achievement Test for third grade students is designed to measure four of the five standards in Ohio's Grade 3 Academic Content Standards for Reading: Acquisition of Vocabulary, Reading Process, Reading Applications: Informational Text and Reading Application: Literary Text. The Ohio Proficiency Test for fourth graders compares student performance to the selected curriculum in five areas: reading, math, citizenship, science, and writing. Test items include multiple choice, short answer, and extended response style questions.

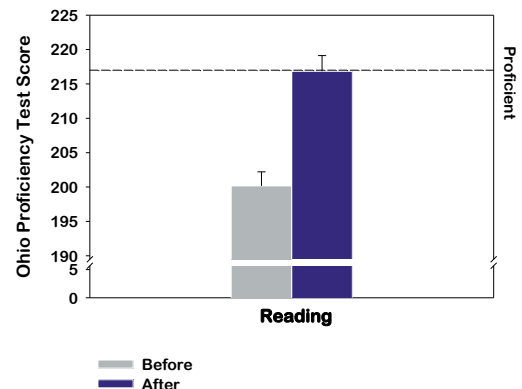
Scores on the OAT and OPT are reported in terms of scale scores. The Ohio State Board of Education has established performance standards (cut scores) based on these scores. These standards divide test scores into performance levels ranging from Limited/Below Basic to Advanced.

Improved Reading Achievement Third Grade Students



After using the Fast ForWord products, third grade students, on average, made significant gains in reading achievement on the OAT.

Improved Reading Achievement Fourth Grade Students



On average, fourth graders made significant improvements in reading achievement on the OPT after Fast ForWord participation.

Approach and Methodology

To improve reading achievement, Fast ForWord products are used within the Oregon City School District along with other initiatives put forth by the district including, for example, Study Island, SuccessMaker, and curriculum alignment. The data in this report are from students who used the Fast ForWord software as part of their reading intervention.

Educators in the Oregon City School District 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.

Participation

All 36 students in this study used the Fast ForWord Language product; four students also

used the Fast ForWord Language to Reading product. The Oregon City School District chose to use a combination of the 75- and 100-Minute Fast ForWord Language Protocol and the 50- and 90-Minute Fast ForWord Language to Reading Protocols. These protocols call for students to use the products for 50, 75, 90 or 100 minutes a day, five days per week for four to twelve weeks.

Assessment Results

Before Fast ForWord use, only one of the students in this study was meeting proficiency. On average, students made significant improvements in reading achievement after participating on the Fast ForWord products. Sixty-nine percent of the students improved at least one performance level and 47% reached a level of Proficient or higher.

By grade, none of the third graders in the study were meeting proficiency on the OAT before using the Fast ForWord products. After participation, one-third of the third grade students reached a performance level of Proficient or better. For the fourth graders, 54% of them reached Proficient after Fast ForWord use.

Discussion

During the 2003 – 2004 school year, 36 third and fourth grade students in the Oregon City School District used the Fast ForWord products. Students were struggling to reach grade appropriate reading proficiency. After Fast ForWord use, 25 of the 36 students improved at least one performance level on the OAT or OPT.

Students significantly improved their reading achievement after Fast ForWord participation. The percentage of students meeting a level of Proficient or better increased from 3% to 47%. These findings demonstrate that, within the Oregon City School District, 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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