

Overview



Highland Elementary School, located in Lake Worth, Florida was seeking a solution to supplement their existing reading programs for their students that were considered part of the lowest performing 25th percentile. Many of these students were classified as ESOL and/or ESE, and some were illiterate in their

own native language. In addition to their low performance, Brian Killeen, Principal of Highland Elementary School, was also concerned about the students' low motivation to continue to learn after FCAT. During the prior school year, he and his staff had noticed a significant drop in the students' motivation to learn, as well as a drop in their academic skills during the period after FCAT and the end of the school year. After meeting with Brian Killeen, Rich Contartesi, Director of Educational Technology for the School District of Palm Beach County, suggested piloting Prescriptive Instruction (Learning Today's Smart Tutor) for 8 weeks during the post-FCAT period to evaluate its effectiveness and viability in the Palm Beach County school system.

Program Implementation

- In April 2006, seven 3rd grade and four 4th grade classroom teachers along with one reading specialist incorporated it as a supplemental tool for their lowest performing 25th percentile students.
- A total of 67 students (69% Hispanic, 27% Black and 4% White) were selected to be part of the pilot study.
- Students were administered the diagnostic/formative skills assessment (pre-test) that was used by Prescriptive Instruction to automatically create an individualized learning program for each student.
- Students utilized Prescriptive Instruction in 40-minute daily instructional sessions for a period of approximately 6 weeks (30 school days). Normally, Prescriptive Instruction is implemented in the beginning of the school year and runs throughout the entire school year for 60-minutes per week per student.
- Students were able to accomplish a mean time on task of 11.25 instructional hours.
- Lessons emphasized instruction in key reading sub skills, including phonics, sight words, vocabulary and comprehension strategies.

Student Demographics

- 67 students, Grades 3 & 4
- 54% Male
- 46% Female
- 69% Hispanic
- 27% non-Hispanic Black
- 4% non-Hispanic White

Program Overview

- 6-week (30 school days) intensive reading instruction program conducted post-FCAT
- Daily 40-minute instruction sessions
- Lab/Classroom instruction model
- Instructional Focus on Phonics, Sight Words, Vocabulary, Comprehension

Results

- The majority of students exhibited significant increases in their reading skill levels
- Significant academic gains were achieved in phonics, sight words, vocabulary and comprehension
- Mean time on task = 11.25 instruction hours
- Teacher surveys indicated students were engaged and motivated despite the program being conducted after the FCAT test.

- Teacher surveys were also conducted at the end of the program to solicit educators' opinions of the instructional content, the overall program effectiveness and student reactions.

Results

Analysis of Students with Academic Gains

Students' skill levels in phonics, sight words, vocabulary and comprehension were measured via Prescriptive Instruction's Diagnostic/Formative Reading Assessment. Pre and post tests were administered to all students before and after utilizing Prescriptive Instruction. The majority of students exhibited significant increases in their reading skill levels. See Illustration 1 for further analysis.

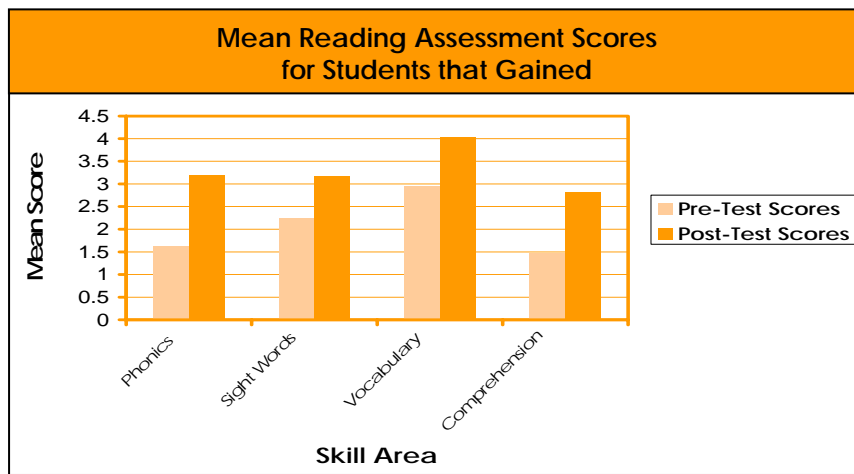


Illustration 1 – Mean Reading Assessment Scores & Grade Level Gains for Students that Showed Academic Gain

Mean Reading Assessment Scores for Students that Gained				
	Phonics	Sight Words	Vocabulary	Comprehension
Mean Pre-Test	1.63	2.25	2.95	1.47
Mean Post-Test	3.19	3.16	4.02	2.81
Mean Grade Level Gain	1.56	0.91	1.07	1.34

Table 1 – Mean Reading Assessment Scores and Grade Level Gains for Students that Showed Academic Gain

Students excluded in the illustration and table above include:

- Students that scored at a mastery level in the pre-test in sight words (grade level of 3.83 or high 3rd), and/or those that scored at a mastery level in the pre-test in phonics (grade level of 4.83 or high 4th)
- Students whose scores remained stable from pre-test to post-test
- Students whose scores showed a decrease from pre-test to post-test