33% of Fast ForWord participants at Downingtown Area School District increase PSSA Reading Level

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Implementation Objectives

The Downingtown Area School District in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, was interested in evaluating the correlation between Reading Progress Indicator (RPI) and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), as well as the impact of the Fast ForWord products on the district's students. PSSA data were collected from students who were assessed with the PSSA in close proximity to being assessed with RPI. In addition, for students in 4th – 8th grade, PSSA scores from before and after participation were used to evaluate the benefit of Fast ForWord use on reading achievement.

Methodology

School personnel used the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) to evaluate the students' reading achievement in 2011 and 2012. The 2012 PSSA Reading scores were compared to scores from RPI tests that were administered within four months of the PSSA assessment. 2012 PSSA Reading scores were compared to 2011 PSSA Reading scores for Fast ForWord participants who used the products for at least 10 days.

Schedule of Use

Students used the 30-Minute protocols, which call for students to use the Fast ForWord products for 30 minutes a day, five days per week for twelve to sixteen weeks. Students used the products for an average of 85 days with an attendance level of 66% and a participation level of 91%. Half the students (52%) completed at least one product; 21% completed two or more.

Assessment Results

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a standards-based criterion-referenced assessment designed to evaluate a student's academic achievement relative to the Pennsylvania state standards. Results are given in terms of a grade-level dependent scaled score. Reading Progress Indicator (RPI) scaled scores provide a continuous measure of a student's reading skills from kindergarten through 10th grade.

RPI scaled scores were positively correlated with PSSA scaled scores at each grade tested (3-5 and 7-8). The correlations ranged from 0.31 (grade 4) to 0.74 (grade 7). With the exception of grade 4, the correlations between the PSSA and RPI were statistically significant at all grades ($p < 0.05$).

Improved Reading Achievement
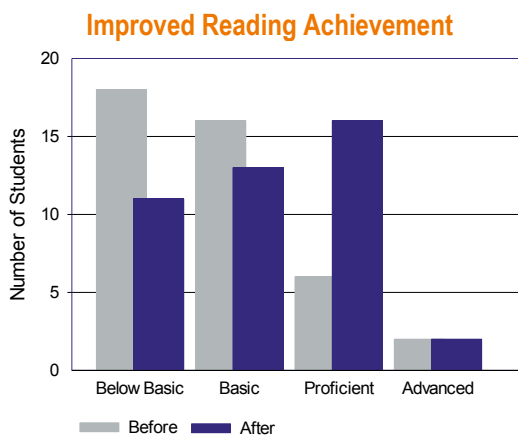
An analysis of student achievement in 2011 and 2012 (before and after Fast ForWord use) showed that following Fast ForWord participation, there was a net increase in achievement level by 14 of the 42 students with scores from both years (33%), with the number of students Proficient or above increasing from 8 students to 18 students. For students who completed at least one product, there was a net increase in achievement level by 44% of the students.

Educational Gains

The results found in this study support other studies demonstrating that RPI is correlated with many reading assessments including state high stakes exams, and that using Scientific Learning products results in the strengthening of foundational reading skills, better positioning students to partake in the classroom curriculum. The students significantly improved their reading achievement.

For other reports showing significant academic gains following use of Scientific Learning products go to:
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