research brief

reading plus®

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More Reading Plus® lessons completed = Significantly greater reading proficiency gains
Follow-up study with a matched student sample

Background

Reading Plus is a web-based silent reading program designed to transform how, what, and why students read while broadening interests and building knowledge. A study was conducted during the 2013-2014 school year to measure the effect of *Reading Plus* practice on the reading proficiency of middle school students in Shelby County, TN. A standardized third-party measure of reading proficiency (GRADE™; Williams, 2001) was used so that proficiency changes could be compared directly to national norms and to the results of other supplemental literacy programs. This brief provides follow-up data to an earlier report (Volume3 Issue1; full report in process).

Purpose of Follow-up Analysis

During the study, it was found that students who completed only a few *Reading Plus SeeReader* lessons generally had lower pre-training GRADE scores. This analysis was undertaken to determine if effects of *Reading Plus* use would remain significant when controlling for pre-training GRADE scores. To this end, four groups of students with differing amounts of program use were closely matched based on their initial GRADE scores. Post-training changes in reading proficiency were evaluated between these matched groups in the same ways as with the overall sample.

Population

This follow-up analysis involved 204 middle school students (sixth, seventh, and eighth grade) from two middle schools with predominatly African American students who qualified for free/reduced priced lunch. Individual students with four different levels of program usage (<40, 41-70, 71-100, and >100 SeeReader lessons) were closely matched on the basis of their pre-training GRADE Total Test Standard Scores, and secondarily by their Comprehension and then Vocabulary scores, yielding four matched groups of 51 students each (the number of students in the matched sets was limited by the smaller number of students with low program use).

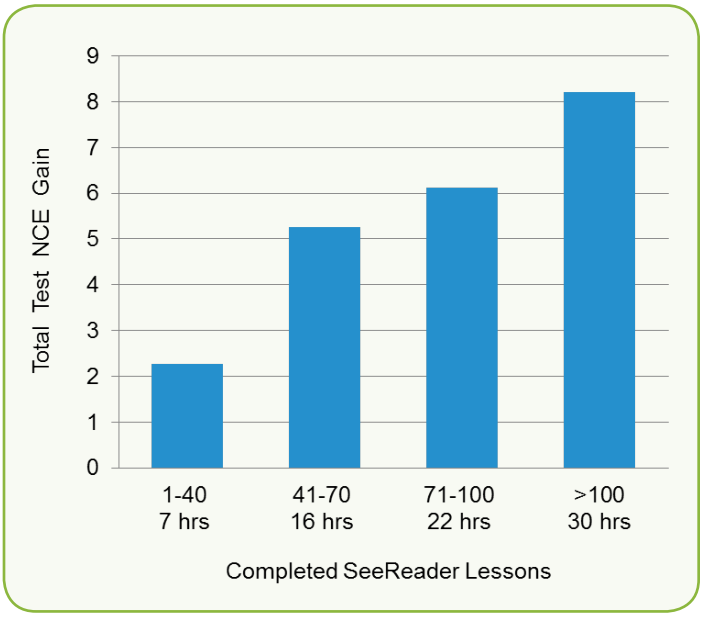
Implementation Overview

The GRADE assessment was administered in September 2013. Students then were scheduled to complete four *Reading Plus SeeReader* lessons per week over the course of 24 weeks. In practice, students used *Reading Plus* to varying degrees during the school year. Program usage was quantified in terms of the number of *SeeReader* lessons completed. The GRADE assessment was administered again in mid-March 2014.

Prepared by the *Reading Plus* Research Department

Summary of Findings

Increases in Total Test Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores associated with *Reading Plus* practice were highly significant (p<.001). Further, significantly larger increases in NCE scores were associated with increased program use (p=.03). Students who completed at least 100 *SeeReader* lessons (~30 hours) achieved reading proficiency score increases four times as large as those measured in students who completed 40 or fewer lessons (~7 hours). Furthermore, the GRADE Standard Score gains achieved by the students who completed 100 or more *SeeReader* lessons (5.8 points) exceeded the gains (4.9 points) measured in the Enhanced Reading Opportunities (ERO) studies published by the U.S. Department of Education (Somers, Corrin, Sepanik, et al., 2010), yet the gains achieved by *Reading Plus* students were attained in less than one-third the amount of instructional time (30 hours vs. 98 hours). This suggests that the instructional approach used by *Reading Plus* is at least three times as efficient as that used in the ERO studies.



References:
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