



Effectiveness of Scholastic's READ 180 as a Remedial Reading Program for Ninth Graders

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READ 180, published by Scholastic, is an intensive, differentiated intervention program using adaptive software for core instruction. READ 180 is used by students with low reading test scores to improve their reading performance. This is the first study of READ 180 in PUSD and was based on data from the school year 2004-2005. For this study, READ 180 was implemented in grade 9 reading classes in high schools.

Study Description

Study design

The study addressed this question: Did students in classes using READ 180 outperform their peers in regular reading classes on the state English language arts test?

The design used to answer this question was a comparison group design, where the effectiveness of READ 180 was tested by comparing the performance of students in classes using READ 180 to a similar group of students enrolled in the district's regular reading program.

Participants

Eligible participants were identified in grade 9 for reading classes in high schools. Comparison group students were chosen from among those served in regular reading classes on the basis of similar pretest scores. Numbers and categories of participants are shown in the following table, which represents the sample after loss of 24 students from the READ 180 group and three students from the comparison group due to missing pre- or posttest scores. READ 180 students were placed in dedicated classes, whereas comparison students (with comparably low reading scores) were interspersed in regular ELA classrooms; thus there were fewer poor readers in those classrooms than in the READ 180 classrooms.

Study Group	Number of teachers	Number of classes	Number of students
READ 180	5	5	72
Comparison	32	57	138
Totals	34	62	210

*Three teachers taught both READ 180 and regular reading classes.

Implementation

A survey of the teachers who used READ 180 indicated that one of the original six teachers used the program for about 60 minutes per week, as compared to an average of about 433 minutes per week for the other five teachers and compared to the recommended usage of 90 minutes per day or 450 minutes per week. The students of the one teacher with particularly low usage were not used in the study. Students in the READ 180 program were placed in classes dedicated to that program and generally met in 90 minute blocks up to five times per week. All teachers reported that they received training and, for all but one of them, this was their first year to use the program.

This research was conducted in 2005. The results are presented to illustrate the report format provided as a MeasureResults™ service by Empirical Education Inc.

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Outcome measures and calculations

Findings of this study are based on data from the California Standards Test (English Language Arts), administered in spring of the 2004-2005 academic year. Each student's CST/ELA score from spring 2004 was used as a pretest.

The statistical test used the pretest to adjust the imbalance between READ 180 and comparison groups. The calculation also took into account clustering of students in classes.

Levels of confidence in our results: Results are reported based on statistical calculations that give a measure of confidence expressed as a probability or *p* value. A low *p* value indicates a low probability that we would detect a difference like the one found in the study if no difference actually existed. A *p* value less than .05 gives us strong confidence in the result (a level conventionally called statistically significant), while a *p* value greater than .20 gives no confidence. Between the two we may have some or limited confidence.

Results

Question: Did students in classes using READ 180 outperform their peers in regular reading classes on the state English language arts test?

Inconclusive results. The difference in outcomes is small and easily due to chance.

When adjusted for pretest differences, the mean for the READ 180 group was slightly higher than the comparison group (2.32 points on the CST scale). However, the *p* value of .65 indicates that the observed difference is easily due to chance.

Conclusion

This study did not find evidence that students in READ 180 outperformed their peers in regular reading classes. A finding of no difference does not mean that the program is ineffective. It simply means that, in this comparison, READ 180 was in the same range of effectiveness as the programs currently in place.

Given inconclusive results, the district should continue monitoring effectiveness of the READ 180 program. More systematic use of formative testing, will provide a more precise measure of differences in growth on which to base decisions.

Cautions for interpreting these results:

- The results of the comparison group design may contain bias because the comparison of READ 180 students and other students was based only on the prior year's score and did not address any other differences that may have accounted for their selection into the program.
- Because 2004-2005 was the first year of implementation, start-up problems or lack of familiarity with the program may have reduced its impact.