



My Reading Coach News

For Teachers

October 2005

Brings the best teachers to every child

Ocotillo 1st and 2nd Graders Validate My Reading Coach

An Interview with Lisa Garcia, Program Coordinator

Ocotillo Elementary School, Tucson, Arizona

School Profile: 375 students; 96% disadvantaged, 86% Hispanic

LisaG3@sunnysideud.k12.az.us

Reading scores declined last year for Ocotillo second graders after 3 years of continuous gains. Although many variables contributed to these results, the discontinuation of My Reading Coach as part of their primary reading intervention program may have been significant. **Our first graders replaced the second graders on My Reading Coach and scored their highest ever.**

As a result of a District wide reading intervention adoption, Ocotillo second graders in 2004-2005 were not able to use My Reading Coach. Instead, a program using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) was used to teach and assess reading proficiency. With the high mobility rate of kids within the District, the decision makers wanted to have all schools use the same approach.

2004-2005 Second Graders Decline

Based on end of the year standardized assessment testing:

- 2003-2004 2nd graders on My Reading Coach scored 5th highest out of 13 schools.
- 2004-2005 2nd graders on a new small group reading intervention program scored 11th out of 13 schools (3rd from the bottom!).

Second Grade's Loss is First Grade's Gain

The change in the second grade reading curriculum made it possible for two first grade teachers to place their students on My Reading Coach. Their current reading program was not meeting the needs of all of their students. Student improvement on My Reading Coach in our after school tutorial convinced these teachers to try it with their kids.

A schedule was set up in the library computer lab for all but 9 of 44 first graders. Students used My Reading Coach 40 minutes a day for five days a week. A first grade teacher and the Title I Program Facilitator

managed the program. Nine students were not placed on My Reading Coach because of scheduling conflicts with Special Education and speech teachers.

2004-2005 First Graders Improve

First graders who **did not** use My Reading Coach in 2003-2004 were tested using the DIBELS assessment at the beginning of second grade (2004-2005):

25% scored as "on-target" readers.

First graders who **did** use My Reading Coach in 2004-2005 were tested using the DIBELS assessment at the beginning of second grade (2005-2006):

61% scored as "on-target" readers.

To our surprise, on entering second grade these students demonstrated that they retained what they learned with a 36% gain over the previous year's scores for entering second graders.

My Reading Coach Makes a Difference

Although there are other factors to consider, including our exceptional teachers, My Reading Coach contributed to the accelerated progress of last year's first graders. There is no way even the best teacher can provide an IEP for each student. **My Reading Coach is flexible and meets the unique needs of all our students quickly, efficiently and economically.** It provides individualized, one-to-one instruction for each student.

We are learning that My Reading Coach is not only effective for struggling readers. Both high and low achievers benefit from individualized instruction. **The basic strategies taught in this program allow our good readers to excel even more.**

To return to what works and is cost effective, we will place all of our struggling 1st and 2nd grade students on My Reading Coach. **Our primary focus needs to be teaching them to read. We have proven that My Reading Coach does the job.**

Help Us Help You!

Tip to share in the newsletter? Want to brag about your students?
Have a question about the program? Something you would like us to change or improve?

Get answers to your questions or send your tips to mail@mindplay.com

My Reading Coach Fills a Niche

Interview with Ray Polk, Director
Educational Services, Inc.,
K – 12 Learning Center, Dade City, Florida
drpolk@edserinc.com

Students who cannot learn to read in the classroom participate in our after school reading tutorial. They come from 6 schools (3 Title One) in the greater Dade City area. Parents provide the transportation. Fees are based on family income and the number of sessions per week for each student. **My Reading Coach is one of our main support programs for struggling readers in 2nd grade through high school.**

My Reading Coach addresses the needs of kids in 3rd grade and higher who never really learned the basics of reading. It focuses on the specific skills each student needs to read. I tell them, "If you listen to the coach and do what he says, you will learn to read." **We went from one to three licenses in 4 months.** We found that students of all ages benefited from these strategies, including 2nd graders.

The Tutorial

Two adults are in a room with four students at a time for one hour. Most students spend 30 minutes per session on My Reading Coach two to three times per week. A certified teacher or teacher assistant sits with the student while they are on the computer. Those who are struggling are given individual support in another room using My Reading Coach Challenge Sheets for 15 minutes.

The Results

Some students complete the program in 90 days; the average is 4 to 6 months. Some might take a year or longer because they are EMH. My Reading Coach is my first choice for slow learners. They need the repetition. As long as a student is making progress, we keep them on the program.

We feel we have been successful when a student's classroom teacher tells us the student is able to read classroom materials. When parents see improvement on the report card, everyone is happy.

My Reading Coach is effective with our students because: It is not a game that distracts them from learning; it focuses them on the proper sound and movement of the mouth; it isolates their specific problem and makes sure they get it right; and they are in and out in a given period of time. One of its greatest assets is that students can hear themselves make the sounds. Students really like hearing themselves.

There is no magic to education, nor is it a mystery. It is hard work and takes planning to help students who have trouble learning to read. **My Reading Coach targets student needs. It doesn't waste time. It filters out the glitz and gives the kids what they need to know.** If they do the work, they learn to read.

Tips for Using the Class Daily Lesson Plan Report

Contributed by Judith Bliss,
President & CEO, MindPlay

My Reading Coach will do 90% of the work needed to teach a student to read. The last and very important 10% must be done by the teacher. It can make the difference between student success and failure. **A teacher helps students succeed by using the Class Daily Lesson Plan Report to monitor student progress and group students for oral reading activities.**

Monitor and Help Struggling Students

Why: When students exceed their average time on task for a lesson, they will begin to get frustrated. The program will put three asterisks under the Time on Task column. This is a warning flag to the teacher. It means that a student needs the teacher's help. **A quick response by the teacher will help a student stay on task and learn to read quickly.**

Teacher Action: Group students who need help with the same lessons.

- 1) **Print the Student's Error Report and give it to the student** – Challenge him/her to review it and find his/her errors. Many students will be able to figure out their problem without further assistance.
- 2) **Review the Student's Error Report with the student** – Help him/her identify specific error patterns.
- 3) **Use the Supplement Lessons with a student having difficulty on a specific lesson** – Find them in My Reading Coach Teaching Guide (Chapter 6).
- 4) **Print the Challenge Sheets for specific lessons** – Give them to the student as homework or as an intervention with the teacher.

Group Students for Oral Reading with their Teacher

Why: Students need to demonstrate their rapid skill acquisition to their teacher. They need encouragement because working one-on-one with the coach is demanding. They are interacting with him in 15 seconds intervals or less. Only the teacher can verify that the student is able to apply what he is learning to oral reading and comprehension.

Teacher Action: Group students with like Assigned Sheet numbers in the same group (1 to 6 students per group).

- 1) **Find the number under the Assigned Sheet column.** This is the Expert Oral Reading Comprehension Sheet number appropriate for each student.
- 2) **Review the Expert Reading Comprehension Activities** in Chapter 4 of the Teaching Guide.
- 3) **Do the specific Expert Comprehension Sheet** with the group (sheet # listed under Assigned Sheet column).
- 4) **Acknowledge the student's effort and progress** with praise or a special treat.

Remember, My Reading Coach is a tool. It helps teachers reach every student.