

Evaluation of *LANGUAGE!*

Intervention Research Grant

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Objectives

- Participants will understand the purpose of the Intervention Research Grant awarded to Miami-Dade County Public Schools.
- Participants will understand the depth and scope of coordinating a district-wide study.
- Participants will receive an overview of the research methods involved in the study.

Research Initiative

- Based on the 2006 FCAT performance, 77,000 secondary school students represent 31% of all struggling middle and high school readers in the state of Florida.
- There is a need for evidence-based research & empirical information that evaluates the impact of reading interventions for struggling secondary school readers.

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Research Questions

1. To what extent do struggling readers receiving *LANGUAGE!* perform better in overall reading ability and silent reading fluency in comparison to similar readers receiving instruction in an alternative remedial program?
2. What is the relationship between professional development and student performance?
3. What is the relationship between teacher's fidelity in implementing *LANGUAGE!* and student performance?

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Intervention Courses

- Intensive Reading Plus (IR+)
 - **Level 1 and 2** students in need of **decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension** instruction
- Intensive Reading (IR)
 - **Level 1 and 2** students in need of **vocabulary and comprehension** instruction.

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Eligible Student Population

- Middle school 6th, 7th and 8th grade students, and high school 9th and 10th grade students who enrolled in Intensive Reading Plus classes in the treatment and the comparison schools at the start of the 2007-08 academic year are eligible for this study.
- Eligibility for enrolling in the Intensive Reading Plus classes is as follows:
 - All students in grades 6-10 (including students with disabilities) who scored FCAT Level 1 or 2, and require intervention in decoding and fluency, as well as vocabulary and comprehension.

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School Selection

- **11 Treatment Schools**
 - Currently implementing *LANGUAGE!* in IR+
 - Several faculty had been trained to use the program
 - School site administrators and faculty indicated a willingness to continue implementation of the program during the grant period
- **11 Comparison Schools**
 - Intensive Reading Plus (IR+) courses continued using their current reading program
 - Eligible schools did not use *LANGUAGE!*

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Generating the Evaluation Sample

- **Groups of Schools**
 - Based on school-level SES, ELL, ESE including specific learning disabled and gifted, Ethnicity, # of students enrolled
- **Propensity Score Matching (PSM)**
 - The study used student-level background information such as previous year of FCAT scores, race/ethnicity, free/reduced lunch eligibility, ELL status, gender, and retention in grade
 - With this approach, students receiving the same propensity score are considered equivalent with respect to the background characteristics factored into the model.

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Key Start Up Activities

- AIR & M-DCPS Project Kick-Off Meeting-Aug. 15, 2007
- M-DCPS confirms final list of participating schools
- AIR Institutional Review Board (IRB) approves data collection – Aug. 29, 2007
- Participating schools provide M-DCPS and AIR IR+ Class Rosters by end of September 2007
 - This cut-off period was established to ensure that students have the opportunity to receive a “sufficient” dosage of the intervention program.

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AIR Data Collection

- Collected pretest and posttest fluency test data in both treatment and comparison schools
- Completed brief “walk-throughs” to collect data on all school and classroom environments, treatment and comparison (fall and spring)
- Conducted site visits to *LANGUAGE!* classrooms to measure fidelity of implementation and to conduct teacher interviews
- Administered End-of-the-Year Teacher Survey

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The Role of the District

- **Providing Data to AIR**
 - Student Demographic & Achievement Data
 - Years of implementation of *LANGUAGE!* program
 - List of supplemental programs used in all grant schools
 - Class Rosters and Teacher Schedules
 - Teacher informed consent forms for Classroom Visits, Surveys and Interviews for AIR IRB
 - Recruiting teachers for the pilot survey
- **Ongoing Monitoring**
- **Scheduling AIR site visitations**
 - to collect data regarding program fidelity
 - to conduct fluency tests (pre and post)

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Professional Development

- District provided AIR team with an overview of district context and criteria of student placement, as well as arranged for program overview training provided by the publisher of *LANGUAGE!*
- Training for Reading Teachers
- Training for Reading Coaches
- Coach Refresher Training

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Professional Development

- Customized school-site support
 - 3 day school-site training for reading coaches and teachers
 - Needs assessment
 - Modeling
 - Building school-site capacity

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The Role of the Reading Coach

- Reading Coaches are a vital part of this project.
- They have assisted MDCPS and AIR by:
 - participating and aiding with the delivery of professional development for teachers at school sites
 - preparing for each site visit through scheduling and coordination of project

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The Role of the Teacher

- Teacher Participation was integral
 - Implemented their “business as usual” reading program
 - Received Professional Development
 - Agreed to data collection
 - Fluency Testing
 - Interviews
 - Classroom Visits
 - End-of-Year Survey

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Limitations of the Study

- **Student and Teacher Mobility**
 - Students moving within schools as well as within or out of district
 - Difficulty locating replacement teachers for IR+ classes
- **Scheduling Issues**
 - Flexibility is key! AIR worked around school-based activities (interim testing, FCAT practice tests, ORF testing)
- **Make-Up Testing**
 - Lessons learned---pre-plan a day for make-up testing at each school

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Positive Experiences

- Beyond the Numbers
- Communication
- Collaboration

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Conclusion

- Findings to be delivered December 2008

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Questions & Comments

Thank you!

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