

LANGUAGE!
The Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum

RESEARCH SUMMARY: INDEPENDENT ARTICLES

*Independent Articles and
Articles with Independent Measures*



LANGUAGE! Research Summary: Independent Articles and Articles with Independent Measures

Independent Articles

Greene, J. F. (1996). *LANGUAGE!* effects of an individualized structured language curriculum for middle and high school students. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 46, 97–121.

- This study documents the success of a 12-month individualized structured language curriculum, *LANGUAGE!*®, provided to middle and high school juvenile offenders (n = 45; 43 males, 2 females). The average length of participation in the program was 22.73 weeks (SD = 8.51). Students came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and were almost all African American, with one Hispanic and one Caucasian. The participants in the study showed significant delays in the acquisition of reading, writing, and spelling. Comprehensive testing resulting in the specific diagnosis of dyslexia was not conducted for the participants.
- The comparison group included 51 adjudicated youth from other facilities. The average length of participation in the program was 20.70 weeks (SD = 8.15). The demographic characteristics were very similar to the treatment group. Though the comparison group received intensive educational intervention during their participation, they were involved in whole-group, traditional programs described as eclectic.
- The evaluation employed a pre/post design with comparison to an equivalent group drawn at random from similar groups of students at similar institutions. Based on pretest scores, the treatment group had greater deficits than did the comparison group. For the treatment group, the average percentile gain for the total battery (*Gray Oral Reading Tests, GORT-3*) was 23 points, or more than three grades, in word identification, spelling, comprehension, and composition during a typical six-month enrollment period.

Greene, J. F. (1998). Another chance: Help for older students with limited literacy. *American Educator/American Federation of Teachers*, 22(1 & 2), 1–6.

- This article recaps the study in the Greene (1996) article and describes why and how *LANGUAGE!* was created.

Klemp, R. (2005, November). *LANGUAGE! program evaluation Los Angeles Unified School District*. Paper presented at the 56th Annual Conference of the International Dyslexia Association, Denver, CO.

- From the Abstract: “Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) conducted a program evaluation to assess the effectiveness of an intensive literacy intervention for older students in middle and high school. Participants included students in grades 6–10 who were reading at about a first- or second-grade level. More than 800 classes were implemented. The average student-teacher ratio was 25:1. Pre- and posttest data were collected during the 2003–2004 school year” (p. 2).
- The participants included 686 students from 16 middle schools and 610 students from nine high schools, which included at-risk students from general education and students with Special Education or English Learner status. Instruments used for pre- and post-testing included: the *Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests (WRMT-R)*, to assess word attack and word recognition; *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS®)* Oral Reading Fluency (DORF), to assess oral reading fluency; and *Degrees of Reading Power (DRP®)* to assess comprehension.
- “The use of the *LANGUAGE!* curriculum for intervention resulted in significant gains in all areas tested: word recognition, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension” (p. 24). The author concluded that all groups of students in the evaluation—general education poor readers, English learners, and special education students—made significant gains in various areas tested.

Moats, L. C. (2004). Efficacy of a structured, systematic language curriculum for adolescent poor readers. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 20, 145–159. doi:10.1080/10573560490262082

- This article described the Sacramento Efficacy Study of *LANGUAGE!*. Three schools participated based on the evidence that 83% of their students were performing below the 25th percentile in reading on the *Stanford Achievement Test (SAT®-9)*. Twenty-four teachers were involved in the implementation, and pre- and post-test data were collected on 552 students in grades 6, 7, 8, and 10. The group had approximately the same number of males and females, who were mostly Asian and Hispanic. About 36% were non-English speakers, and a small number, 14, were receiving special education services.
- For the Short and Long Forms of the *Multilevel Academic Survey Test (MAST)*, students made statistically significant gains in all grades, with moderately high effect sizes for all grades: .45 for grade 6, .55 for grade 7, .57 for grade 8, and .56 for grade 10. On the *Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement–Revised (WJ-R)* Word Attack (WA) and Letter-Word Identification (LW) subtests, students showed statistically significant gains ($p < .05$) on five of the eight comparisons, with effect sizes between .23 to .50 for the LW and .04 to .58 for the WA.
- In the Discussion, the author stated the significant gains in basic word recognition, word attack, and passage comprehension between September and May “occurred in the first year of implementation with novice teachers who receive minimal support after their introductory workshop” (p. 156). Additionally, “observed growth in relative standing for most grade levels on most reading measures suggests that these students were beginning the process of normalizing their reading skills. Typically, students whose skills are so poor would make no growth in relative standing and might even fall further behind their peers without an intensive intervention” (p. 156).

Parker, E. G. (2009). *Assessing the impact of the reading intervention LANGUAGE! on state reading proficiency scores for secondary students with disabilities* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3368229)

- From the Abstract: “This investigation sought to measure the impact of the literacy curriculum *LANGUAGE!* on students with disabilities, at the middle and high school levels, in an urban Northeast Ohio public school district.”
- Participants included 166 students with IEPs in 6th through 12th grade who progressed through at least one book in the *LANGUAGE!* curriculum during the 2007–2008 school year. The study dealt exclusively with existing data. Students at the middle school level received two periods of *LANGUAGE!* per day. Students at the high school level who qualified for books A or B received two periods per day, while those who qualified for books C or D received one period per day. Ten different disabilities were represented by this group of students. The largest disability category, 59%, was students with Specific Learning Disabilities, and the second largest disability category, 17%, was students with Cognitive Disabilities.
- Results showed 96% of students demonstrated growth in one or more areas of literacy (fluency and/or comprehension) after one year of *LANGUAGE!* instruction. More than half of the students who made growth in both fluency and comprehension (60% or 100 students) also improved on their Reading Proficiency subtest of the 2008 *Ohio Achievement Test (OAT)* at the middle school level or the *Ohio Graduation Test (OGT)* at the high school level. Of the students who made growth in either fluency or comprehension (37% or 61 students), almost half demonstrated transference of their reading skills as shown through improvement on the state reading proficiency subtest scores. The author concluded by saying, “the majority of the students who participated in *LANGUAGE!* and experienced successful growth in fluency and comprehension, also experienced success on their OAT/OGT Reading Proficiency subtest. Beyond these admirable test results lies the ultimate reward in achieving advances in literacy, skills directly applicable to personal growth and options while pursuing a quality life” (p. 74).

Robinson, C. (2002). *Florida Center for Reading Research: LANGUAGE!*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Center for Reading Research.

- This article included a review of the *LANGUAGE!* curriculum by the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR). Besides the original study by Greene (1996), Robinson highlights three additional studies briefly described here.

- o Oral reading fluency growth of 30 third grade students from Baldwin County, Alabama, went from 34 words correct per minute, on average, in the fall of 2001 to almost 69 words correct per minute in the fall of 2002. At the beginning of the year, all but one student scored in the at-risk range based on *DIBELS*. At the end of the year, 42% of the students achieved fluency rates above the at-risk mark.
- o In a study in Idaho, *LANGUAGE!* was implemented from October through May, five days a week for 30-90 minutes in grades 3 through 6. Gains were measured using the *Woodcock-Johnson Basic Reading* subtests. Results indicated growth between 8 months and 1.3 years on Letter Word Identification, Word Attack, and Passage Comprehension for all four grades.
- o The FCRR also referenced the Sacramento City Unified School District study referenced in the Moats (2004) article, reviewed in this summary.
- The FCRR article did conclude that the studies mentioned did not have control groups and, therefore, it was not possible to determine whether or not the gains seen in the studies were attributable solely to the implementation of the *LANGUAGE!* curriculum. However, Robinson stated, “the improvements in student performance and the resultant indicators of the efficacy of the *LANGUAGE!* program are very encouraging” (p. 3).

Articles with Independent Measures

Cambium Learning Group | Voyager. (n.d.). *Hawthorne School District, California: LANGUAGE! the comprehensive literacy curriculum*. Dallas, TX: Author.

- During the 2006-2007 school year, *LANGUAGE!* was implemented at all three of the middle schools in Hawthorne. This report includes 775 participants who had matched scores on the *California Standards Test for English Language Arts (CST-ELA)*, 25% of whom were students receiving special education services.
- Overall, 33% of students in grades 6-8 grew one or more achievement levels on the *CST-ELA* from spring 2006 to spring 2007 after one year of *LANGUAGE!* instruction. For students receiving special education services, 29% of the 193 students grew one or more achievement levels on the *CST-ELA*.

Cambium Learning Group | Voyager. (n.d.). *Hawthorne School District, California: LANGUAGE! the comprehensive literacy curriculum: English language learner results*. Dallas, TX: Author.

- This report evaluates “the progress in reading and English language skills of middle school English language learners (ELLs) enrolled in *LANGUAGE!* classes at one and two years of instruction during the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years” (p. 2). Several comparisons with different groups of students were done.
- A total of 325 students, 46 with disabilities, had one full year of *LANGUAGE!* instruction and *California Standards Test for English Language Arts (CST-ELA)* scores from spring 2007 and spring 2008. Overall, 36% of these students improved one or more performance categories on the *CST-ELA*. For students with disabilities, 30% improved one or more performance categories.
- A total of 195 students, 16% with disabilities, had one full year of *LANGUAGE!* instruction and *California English Language Development Test (CELDT)* scores for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 administrations. Overall, 50% of the 195 students improved one or more performance levels on the *CELDT*. The total percent of students who moved into the Early Advanced and Advanced categories, required as part of the criteria in determining if an ELL should be reclassified as English proficient, went from 15% in 2007-08 to 38% in 2008-09. For students with disabilities, the total percent of students in Early Advanced and Advanced categories went from 0% to 19%.

Cambium Learning Group | Voyager. (n.d.). *Lee County Public Schools, Florida: LANGUAGE! the comprehensive literacy curriculum*. Dallas, TX: Author.

- This report shows the progress made by students in grades 6-8 receiving instruction in *LANGUAGE!* during the first and second years of implementation in Lee County Public Schools. *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)* results were reported. The first year of implementation is discussed here since it provides information about students with disabilities.
- A total of 4,197 students had matched scores for the spring 2004, 2005, and 2006 *FCAT* administrations. Prior to the *LANGUAGE!* implementation, 12% of students in grades 6 and 7, and 14% of students in grade 8 improved one or more achievement levels on the *FCAT* Reading. After 6.5 months of *LANGUAGE!* instruction, 39% of students in grade 6, 47% of students in grade 7 and 28% of students in grade 8 improved one or more achievement levels on the *FCAT* Reading. For students with disabilities ($n = 1,024$), prior to *LANGUAGE!* instruction, 10% improved one or more achievement levels, and after *LANGUAGE!* instruction, 25% improved one or more levels.
- Comparing the growth in developmental scale score between *LANGUAGE!* students with the rest of the district and the state was revealing. In grade 6, the statewide gain was 76 developmental scale score points, districtwide was 118, general education students ($n = 1,027$) gained 196, and students with disabilities ($n = 314$) gained 193 developmental scale score points. In grade 7, the statewide gain was 120 developmental scale score points, districtwide was 137, general education students ($n = 1,446$) gained 205, and students with disabilities ($n = 426$) gained 198 developmental scale score points. In grade 8, the statewide gain was 141 developmental scale score points, districtwide was 127, general education students ($n = 1,330$) gained 202, and students with disabilities ($n = 442$) gained 201 developmental scale score points.

Cambium Learning Group | Voyager. (n.d.). *Rialto Unified School District, California: LANGUAGE! the comprehensive literacy curriculum*. Dallas, TX: Author.

- During the 2006-07 school year, Rialto used *LANGUAGE!* as its intensive intervention for struggling readers at the elementary school level. A total of 455 students enrolled in *LANGUAGE!* had *California Standards Test for English Language Arts (CST-ELA)* scores for the spring 2006 and 2007 administrations. A subset of 225 students enrolled in *LANGUAGE!* had *CST-ELA* scores for the spring 2005, 2006, and 2007 administrations.
- Overall, 30% of the 455 students improved on the *CST-ELA* one or more performance levels. For the 225 students in the subgroup with three years of *CST-ELA* scores, an analysis was done looking at performance before and after receiving *LANGUAGE!* instruction. In the 2005-2006 school year, overall 4% of these students were at or above Basic. In the 2006-2007 school year, 13% of these students were at or above Basic. For students receiving special education services in this subgroup ($n = 105$), the rate of students at or above Basic went from 2% to 10% after *LANGUAGE!* instruction.