



Iowa School District Builds on Success with Academy of MATH by Adding Academy of READING

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**Tyson Long, Special Education Teacher and Head of the Learning Lab
Davenport North High School, Davenport, IA**

From Dr. Suess to a doctoral degree, reading can open eyes and expand minds to endless opportunities. The ability to read and comprehend is the one skill that makes all other learning possible. So when Tyson Long, Special Education Teacher at Davenport North High School, together with other educators wanted to improve reading scores in their classrooms, they searched for some outside help.

The Davenport School District had already been using the Academy of MATH® for two years when they added the Academy of READING® in 2004. Originally a program they used for only the special education students, Davenport North found the Academy of READING and the Academy of MATH so helpful that their administration began using it with students of all abilities, in all three high schools (Central, West & North).

Long has 80 students at Davenport North who get pulled out of their regular classes to take part in the Learning Lab. They’re divided into four classes that each use the Academy of READING program to work on reading skills necessary to improve their ITED (Iowa Test of Educational Development) scores. With special education students normally ranking in the fifth percentile on the ITED, Long is extremely pleased that Davenport North’s average NPR (national percentage ranking) is now in the 13th percentile.

Focus on:

Academy of READING®
Academy of MATH®

Fast Facts:

Location:

- Davenport, IA

School:

- Davenport North High School

Grades:

- 9 - 12

Student Population:

- Approximately 1,200

Student Demographics:

- White: 67.2
- Black: 25.4
- Hispanic: 4.5
- Other: 2.9

Website:

www.davenport.k12.ia.us/north



What the students put into it, they get out, and in order to get some of the students to buy into it, we host a “free pizza” competition between the four classes to see which class can get the highest scores,” said Long. “ There’s one group of students that meet at the chalkboard before class to talk about how they’re going to get their scores up.”

Based on extensive research and proven in thousands of elementary, middle and high schools across the country, the award-winning Academy of READING delivers a powerful intervention software solution that helps at-risk students achieve rapid, permanent gains in reading. The methodology incorporates instructional and behavioral principles to address skills development and learner motivation.

Age-appropriate content, interfaces and graphical elements create an optimal learning environment for students from K-12. Students start on “easier” material and work through content, celebrating success at every step along the way. Positive feedback and motivational “trophies” keep students focused on learning.

“The students that improve, once they see their scores start to go up; they become excited and seem proud of themselves,” Long said. “They see their success in the trophy case and can actually see how far they’ve come. They’re happy that they can track their accomplishments on the computer.”

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One freshman student at Davenport North scored in the 11th percentile on the ITED, but thanks to the Academy of READING, increased his ranking to the 80th percentile by his junior year.

The Academy of READING works on skill mastery based on five core areas identified by the National Reading Panel. The program measures processing speed, accuracy and pace to ensure the automaticity of subskills. The sequential tutorial-practice-train methods provide structured learning and multiple opportunities for practice. Academy of READING offers a structured intervention program that helps struggling students become proficient readers. Students develop fluency in foundation reading skills through focused training in phonemic awareness, sound symbol association, phonics and decoding, and comprehension.

Student training programs are automatically assigned based on a placement test that provides a snapshot of each student’s reading abilities relative to their grade. From there, an adaptive intervention engine adjusts to students’ responses, accelerating training when mastery is demonstrated or reviewing concepts when needed. This way each student has an individualized plan for improvement, based on their skills and style of learning.

“[A] student came in reading at Kindergarten level, and after using the Academy of READING program for a few semesters, left reading at his appropriate grade level. This kind of improvement is really exciting,” Long said. “I was really proud of him!”

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About AutoSkill® International

AutoSkill creates award-winning intervention solutions to help close the achievement gap in K-12 schools. For over 17 years, its research-based programs have helped at-risk students to build fluency in the foundation skills of reading and math. The company’s core products, Academy of READING and Academy of MATH, deliver rapid, permanent gains so students progress in their education and administrators meet AYP targets. For more information, visit www.autoskill.com.