

Struggling Students Achieve Lasting Gains in Literacy

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Joanne Curran, Reading Teacher, Ladue High School, Ladue, Missouri

Every student that passes through Joanne Curran’s classroom struggles with some aspect of reading — fluency, vocabulary, comprehension or any of a number of important components. Consequently, every child she works with reads far more slowly than age-level expectations. An important addition to Ladue’s curriculum offers each of these students the opportunity to turn all that around — AutoSkill’s Academy of READING®.

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.

Ladue created a special class for struggling readers in the 2005-06 school year utilizing Academy of READING as an important tool.

“Coming in, I knew that we were seeing two to three year lags in reading fluency in our district’s primary schools,” Curran said. “I knew that by the time those kids got to high school it would be five or six years.”

An important benchmark for any literacy intervention solution is how quickly the program can help struggling readers close that achievement gap. Academy of READING students average more than one grade level gain on their reading comprehension test in less than 10 hours of direct training, and students show an

Focus on:

Academy of READING®

Fast Facts:

Location:

- Saint Louis, MO

School:

- Ladue High School

Grades:

- 9 to 12

Student Population:

- 1,145

Student Demographics:

- White: 70.6%
- Hispanic: 1.1%
- Black: 20.4%
- Other: 7.9%

Website:

www.ladue.k12.mo.us/lhwhs

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A helping hand for literacy ▶



average of 2.2 grade level gains after just 21 hours of direct training.

As impressive as those numbers are, equally impressive to Curran are the pre-testing and in-product reporting tools offered by Academy of READING. Each student's training stream is automatically assigned based on a placement test that provides a snapshot of each student's reading abilities relative to their grade. Detailed views of student progress enable formative instruction and allow Curran to track her students as they work through the program — alerting her to trouble spots, “teacher time” flags and how much time is being spent on each task.

“Knowing that there are 81 sub-skills involved in mastering reading fluency — no teacher can take the time to figure out which sub-skill or sub-skills each student is missing. It's just not practical,” Curran said.

“Fortunately, the Academy of READING reports show that!” To help her fully utilize all aspects of the Academy of READING and its reporting functionality, Curran participated in Education Technology Partners professional development workshops and found the training to be “particularly helpful” in understanding this powerful intervention tool.

As students progress, AutoSkill products give administrators and teachers instant access to critical information to make data-driven decisions on their school and district reading and math programs. In-product reports provide graphical views of performance at the student, class and school level. While these reports can be crucial in viewing individual performance, Curran has another important use for them — motivation.

“Because I can say (to a student) ‘you have mastered these skills, but you need improvement here’ it makes it very concrete for the student,” Curran said. “And with class-wide reports, we've created some friendly competition between my classes that has stimulated kids to do even better.”

Curran has also used the reports to reward and acknowledge the hard work of her students — creating “mini pep rallies” where students applaud each other for achievements within Academy of READING.

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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.

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