

READ 180 Stage B:
Clark County
School District

IMPACT STUDY



Final Report

A Study of
READ 180[®]

in Middle Schools in Clark County
School District, Las Vegas, Nevada

*Prepared by Dr. Rosemary Papalewis
and Scholastic Research
and Evaluation Department*

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Foreword

There is a crisis in American middle and high schools: one in four adolescents cannot read well enough to identify the main idea in a passage or understand informational text. This keeps them from succeeding in challenging high school coursework and from graduating from high school prepared for the option of postsecondary education.

— Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003

Our country’s literacy crisis comes at a time when we know more about effective reading instruction than we have ever known. Research shows that struggling readers who receive intensive and targeted instruction can attain the literacy skills needed for academic success. *READ 180*, Scholastic’s proven reading solution, provides this type of support on a daily basis. In each *READ 180* session, students learn and apply skills in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in an environment that offers individualized instruction, continuous assessment, and encouraging feedback.

READ 180 is a research-based reading intervention program that has been proven to raise the reading achievement scores of struggling readers. Based on ten years of scientific research in association with Vanderbilt University and years of research and implementation in thousands of classrooms, *READ 180* is producing quantifiable gains and is reshaping the attitudes and perceptions of the older struggling reader—from a student with few prospects to one with unlimited possibilities.

This impact study provides an overview of how *READ 180*’s distinctive features meet the needs of older struggling readers. Further, this study presents the effectiveness of the program among middle school students in the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The use of the *READ 180* program in CCSD has grown to over 100 elementary, middle, and high school reading programs.

The Need

BACKGROUND

Clark County School District (CCSD) located in Las Vegas, Nevada, serves approximately 244,768 students in 235 K–12 schools. Under the Nevada Education Reform Act School Designation 2002–2003, one school was designated exemplary, two high achieving, 202 adequate, and 30 needing improvement. The District’s demographic characteristics in 2001–2002 were 47 percent Caucasian, 14 percent African American, 31 percent Hispanic, 8 percent other, 11 percent special education population, 16 percent English-Language Learners, and 42 percent of the students received free and reduced meals in grades K–8. In 2002–2003, CCSD began implementing a new plan called “A+ in Action” intended to improve achievement, access, and accountability. The purpose of this plan is to establish a results-oriented educational system in which educators and students, with parent and family support, are held accountable for student learning.

Clark County School District began implementing the *READ 180* program at eight middle schools and two high schools during the 1999–2000 school year. Student reading achievement improved considerably at those ten sites, prompting expansion of the program to additional sites. Since then, the use of the *READ 180* program in CCSD has grown to over 100 elementary, middle, and high school reading programs, as well as one special school and one education program for the homeless.

The Solution

READ 180 OVERVIEW

A result of more than ten years of research by experts at Vanderbilt University, *READ 180* is an intensive reading program designed to meet the needs of students whose reading achievement is below the proficient level. Through a collaborative research effort between Vanderbilt University and the Orange County Public School System in Florida, the *READ 180* pilot was used with more than 10,000 students between 1991 and 1999. The research conclusively showed that when schools implement and follow the instructional model, significant gains can be expected after one to two years in the areas of reading achievement, the development of more positive attitudes and behaviors, and overall higher school achievement.

READ 180 is designed to support teachers in their efforts to improve reading achievement for students reading below grade level in Grades 4–12.

READ 180 utilizes an intensive reading intervention approach to:

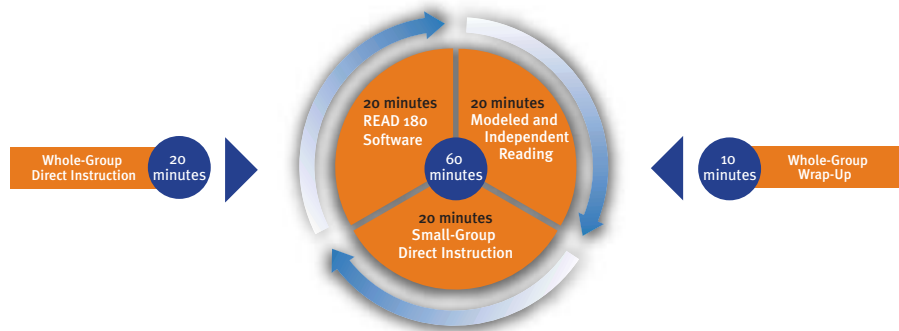
- Deliver individualized, adjusted reading instruction to improve students' reading skills;
- Provide practice and the application of skills in multiple contexts to increase reading achievement; and
- Support and motivate students as they progress toward becoming lifelong readers and learners.

The *READ 180* instructional model provides a simple way to organize instruction and classroom activity. It combines research-based reading practices with the effective use of technology, offering students an opportunity to achieve reading success through a combination of instructional, modeled, and independent reading components. The instructional model is designed to send a strong message that each individual is valued, supported, given choices, and can succeed. The *READ 180* model combines the following elements:

- 90-minute daily class periods
- Reduced class size of 15 students per class
- *READ 180* software that provides students with daily, intensive, individualized practice
- Daily modeled or independent reading practice
- Daily individual or small-group instruction
- Whole-group instruction in word analysis, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and writing

- Distinct classroom areas designed for each type of instructional activity including: a computer area with five computers for the *READ 180* Instructional Software, a comfortable reading area with cassette players and headphones for listening to the *READ 180* Audiobooks, and a worktable for teacher-directed small-group instruction

The 90-Minute Instructional Model



The *READ 180* approach begins with 20 minutes of whole-class literacy, in which the teacher and students engage in shared reading, read alouds, or mini skill lessons. Next, the students are split into three groups, and each group participates in three 20-minute rotations. During each of the three rotations the teacher works directly with one small group of students, while the remaining two groups work independently at the computer or reading stations. After the three rotations, the instruction ends with a 10-minute wrap-up for students to reflect on their daily performance.

To assist the teacher in developing lesson plans and monitoring student progress, the *READ 180* Stage B instructional components include: a Teacher’s Guide; Reading Strategies; Writing and Grammar Strategies; and a Teacher’s Resource book including topics on Topic CD passages, QuickWrite Assignments, Comprehension Support, Wrap-ups, and Classroom Management Support. The Scholastic Management Suite™ software provides detailed progress reports allowing teachers to identify skills mastered and areas for improvement. The Scholastic Reading Inventory™ software provides an assessment of overall reading achievement and uses the Lexile Framework® to facilitate assignment of program materials by matching student levels to text materials.

Research Study

INTENT OF STUDY

Struggling older readers in middle schools (Grades 6–8) in Clark County School District were the focus of this study. Research (Moats, 1999; Papalewis, in press; Papalewis & Fortune, 2002) suggests that teachers and principals, and the curriculum they choose supported with strong teacher professional development, can and do make a difference.

Statistical data gathered from the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) were examined for the *READ 180* students in CCSD middle schools for the 2002 to 2003 school year to measure the impact of *READ 180* on student reading ability. An additional purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of *READ 180* Stage B reading program.

Statistical data gathered from the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) were examined for the READ 180 students in CCSD middle schools for the 2002 to 2003 school year.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

District officials who gathered *READ 180* documents through a series of requests over approximately a six-month period provided the data for this study. No prior database existed for SRI scores. Fourteen middle schools supplied data on SRI scores in 2002–2003. Thirty-five (N=35) teachers from a pool of 110 *READ 180* CCSD teachers (N=110) responded to survey questions. Additionally, school site attendance officers provided student demographic data, i.e., gender, race, etc., for the 14 schools.

Four hundred and twenty-three students (N=423) completed pretests August through October and posttests March through May. All of the 423 students had Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) and Percentile Rank (PR) data. However, only 339 students had a numeric pre- and post-Lexile score. Demographic data was compiled by category: gender, race, Special Education eligible, and English-Language Learners.

It is not clear if these students were participating in their first year of the program or if they were long-term users of *READ 180*. During 2002 to 2003, CCSD was shifting their student tests from the Terra Nova test (fall 2001) to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (fall 2002); therefore, comparison scores were not available for the purposes of this study. Attendance data were also not available.

RESULTS

Analysis of Data—Normal Curve Equivalent and Percentile Rank

As stated previously, there was no preexisting database for the SRI scores. The scores sent from the various schools were submitted over a four-month period. Additionally, *READ 180* teachers (N=35) from 25 school sites completed teacher surveys.

Table 1 provides the results of the analysis for Normal Curve Equivalents and Percentile Ranks for the *READ 180* participants. Four hundred and 23 students (N=423) had pretest and posttest SRI scores (including Beginning Reading, BR scores). *READ 180* participants made significant pre- to posttest gains. The gains can also be classified as substantial in terms of NCE growth. In a meta-analysis of comprehensive school reforms and achievement (Borman, Hewes, Overman & Brown, 2003), gains in NCEs between 1.9 and 3.2 were considered to be “meaningful.” The students participating in *READ 180* demonstrated NCE gains exceeding 7 points.

Table 1. Pretest to Post-Percentile Ranks and Normal Curve Equivalents on SRI.

Variable	Pretest			Posttest			Gain*
	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	
Percentile Rank	7.28		423	12.63		423	5.35**
Normal Curve Equivalent	11.28	14.4	423	18.59	16.3	423	7.34*

* On matched pairs only

** Significant differences, p<.01, paired ‘t’ test

Tables 2 and 3 present Percentile Rank and Normal Curve Equivalent data by grade level. Pretest to post-gains were observed for each grade level, 6–8. The largest gain was seen at grade 8. As noted above, NCE gains exceeding 2 points should be considered meaningful. It is clear that *READ 180* Stage B intervention significantly and substantially increased the reading ability of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

Table 2. Percentile Rank on SRI by Grade Level.

Grade	N	Percentile Rank Mean Pretest	Percentile Rank Mean Posttest	Gain
6	189	9.6	14.5	4.9*
7	163	5.3	10.2	4.9*
8	71	5.4	13.1	7.7*

* Significant differences, p<.01, pre-to post-paired ‘t’ test

Table 3. Normal Curve Equivalent on SRI by Grade Level.

Grade	N	NCE Mean Pretest	NCE Mean Posttest	Gain
6	189	14.36	20.91	6.55*
7	163	8.79	16.49	7.7*
8	71	8.31	17.44	9.13*

* Significant differences, $p < .01$, pre to post paired 't' test

The students participating in READ 180 demonstrated NCE gains exceeding 7 points.

Analysis of Data—Lexiles

Of the 423 students, only 339 students had both pre- and posttest Lexiles (BR students had no pretest Lexile score). Table 4 demonstrates statistically significant pretest to posttest-Lexile growth. Since Lexile scores are specific to SRI data, more extensive disaggregation was conducted. A summary of those findings appears below.

Table 4. SRI Pretest to Posttest-Lexile Scores for READ 180 Participants.

	Pretest			Posttest			Gain*
	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	
Lexile	461.09	204.57	339	579.86	195.74	339	118.77**

* On matched pairs only

** Significant differences, $p < .01$, paired 't' test

The average individual student changes by grade in SRI scores were:

- Sixth grade (N=159) a gain of 88.91L, with a standard deviation of 157.24L (statistically significant, $p < .01$, paired samples 't' test).
- Seventh grade (N=128) a gain of 137.84L, with a standard deviation of 197.44L (statistically significant, $p < .01$, paired samples 't' test).
- Eighth grade (N=52) a gain of 163.12L, with a standard deviation of 184.20L (statistically significant, $p < .01$, paired samples 't' test).

Table 5 displays the percentage of students by grade level that improved scores from pretest to posttest. *Scholastic Reading Inventory Technical Inventory* (SRI, 2001) defines average grade level gain as an increase of 50 Lexiles.

Table 5. Improved SRI Scores by Grade and Grade Level.

Grade	Percent of Students With Improved Scores	Average Grade Level Gain
6th	73.0% improved their score from pre- to posttest	Equal to 1.76 grade levels
7th	75.8% improved their score from pre- to posttest	Equal to 2.37 grade levels
8th	80.8% improved their score from pre- to posttest	Equal to 3.09 grade levels

Table 6 displays the 339 students with both pretest and posttest numeric scores on the SRI exam. Data is shown by grade level and posttest Lexile scores. The majority of students at each grade level experienced an increase in their reading score.

Table 6. Percent Change in Lexile Growth on SRI by Grade Level.

Grade	Percentage of Students Revealing Improved Scores Pretest to Posttest					Lowered Posttest Score
	Up to One Grade Level 1L–49L	One + Grade Level 50L–99L	Two + Grade Levels 100L–149L	Three + Grade Levels 150L–199L	Four + Grade Levels 200L +	
6th N=159	11.95%	12.58%	13.21%	15.09%	20.13%	27%
7th N=128	10.94%	10.16%	10.94%	10.92%	32.81%	24.2%
8th N=52	7.69%	7.67%	9.62%	15.39%	40.39%	19.2%

In terms of the four SRI Interactive performance standards (At Risk, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) for middle school and high school students as defined in the *SRI Technical Guide*:

- Thirty-four percent of the 6th grade *READ 180* participants had sufficient gains in SRI scores to move to a higher proficiency level.
- Fifty percent of the 7th grade *READ 180* participants had sufficient gains in SRI scores to move to a higher proficiency level.
- Sixty-two percent of the 8th grade *READ 180* participants had sufficient gains in SRI scores to move to a higher proficiency level.

Sixth, 7th, and 8th grade students in the “At Risk” category prior to *READ 180* had the greatest gains in SRI scores after participation in *READ 180*.

Table 7 presents demographic information for students and Lexile gains. These scores were compiled from SRI student scores and teacher surveys. The “n” size represents data from the 13 middle schools that provided such information. While there were 339 students with numeric pre- and posttests, the District provided demographic data for only 275 students. Table 7 shows the student numbers and Lexile gains for this smaller data set.

Table 7. READ 180 Student Demographic Information.

DEMOGRAPHIC	N	Lexile Gain
Gender		
Male	169	116.28
Female	106	114.11
Race		
Caucasian	86	123.57
African American	58	136.02
Asian	6	319.50
Hispanic	119	84.64
Special Education Eligible		
Specific Learning Disability	91	124.21
Emotional Disturbance	4	112.75
Mental Retardation	2	141.50
Health Impairment	6	66.33
Special Education Placement		
80–100% GE	13	205.01
40–70% GE	45	101.16
Less–40% GE	12	139.33
English-Language Learners		
Non-English-Proficient	1	279.00
Limited English-Proficient	14	91.14
Non-English-Proficient Waiver	1	387.00
• Limited English-Proficient	7	166.00
Limited English-Proficient Waiver	1	41.00
EE=English Exclusive	30	148.40
J=English Exclusive	41	101.22
TS=Tested by ELLP	10	73.40

Sixth, 7th, and 8th grade students in the At Risk category prior to READ 180 had the greatest gains in SRI scores after participation in READ 180.

Teacher Survey Data

Thirty-five teachers (N=35) responded to a survey designed by Scholastic (Papalewis, 2002). Clark County Central Office personnel mailed the survey to 98 teachers (N=98) in Clark County School District in May and September of 2003. Responses were received through October 2003. A questionnaire asked teachers to describe their implementation practices and their perceptions of student success due to the *READ 180* program in their classrooms. These 35 teachers came from the following schools:

- Twenty-three middle/junior high schools (N=23)
- Two surveys were returned without listing a school name, though one did indicate a middle school teacher completed it.

Overall, the findings indicated that:

Most (80% or more) are doing:

- Instructional reading on computers
- Students record their reading
- Students attend the *READ 180* class 5 days a week
- Teachers integrate data from the *Student Management Suite*™ to guide student progress
- In-service training was provided to teachers

Half (50%) or more are:

- 45–50 minute class periods
- No more than 15–20 students per class
- Core class time consists of 3 rotating groups of students on core activities
- Core activities are 20 minutes each
- Independent reading
- Small group or 1:1 direct instruction
- Modeled reading on Audiobooks or independent reading is done daily
- Individualized Software instruction is done daily
- Students participate in mini writing lessons
- Homework is part of the program model

Table 8 depicts a numerical count of all of the teacher responses to descriptors of a fully functioning *READ 180* Stage B classroom. Teachers were asked to check the descriptors that best described their classroom practices for *READ 180* Stage B.

Table 8. *READ 180* Stage B Teacher Perceptions Using Program Descriptors.

Teacher Responses N=35	<i>READ 180</i> DESCRIPTORS	Percent of Responses
15	78–115 minute class period	37%
24	45–50 minute class period	59%
24	No more than 15–20 students per class	59%
22	Core class time consists of 3 rotating groups of students on core activities	54%
24	Core activities are 20 minutes each consisting of:	59%
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Reading 	80%
35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional reading on computers 	86%
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group or 1:1 direct instruction (1=1.5) 	78%
9	Class ends with 10 minute wrap-up	22%
14	Modeled reading on Audiobooks/independent reading done daily	34%
10	Modeled reading on Audiobooks/independent reading done twice weekly	24%
10	Modeled reading on Audiobooks/independent reading done three times weekly	24%
20	Individualized Software instruction is done daily	49%
8	Individualized Software instruction is done twice a week	20%
13	Individualized Software instruction is done three times a week	31%
25	Students participate in mini writing lessons	61%
33	Students record their reading	94%
31	Students attend the <i>READ 180</i> class 5 days week	89%
33	Teachers integrate data from the <i>Student Management Suite</i> ™	94%
30	In-service training was provided to teachers	86%
26	Homework is part of program model	74%

A sample of what teachers wrote about the impact they believed *READ 180* had on their students' reading achievement is listed here.

“My students are the ‘success story’ at the end of the READ 180 video. Their Lexiles have increased dramatically, as well as their fluency and confidence in their abilities as readers. Out of 40 students, only 5 will repeat the program as 8th graders.”

“The students are improving on their test scores for their annual IEP’s. The ELL’s stay in one year and excel the next year in regular reading and the low stanines achieve success and actually see success so it gives them the confidence they need to succeed elsewhere.”

In explaining the impact they felt *READ 180* has on their students' motivation to learn and improve their reading skills, a teacher wrote:

“ELL students improve—the idea of reading/speaking/hearing without all others watching, increases confidence and willingness to try. One student began not registering on the STAR test —after READ 180 for 1 semester, the student scored .9–1.9 on STAR—English improved. Special education students who were previously unwilling to even try in classes due to difficulty, were willing and passing at semester.”

Another teacher wrote:

“I’ve had several teachers approach me with stories of how some of the students have improved. Confidence is the greatest improvement and the easiest to see but I have had students read a paragraph in half the time it used to take them. Everyone’s comprehension has improved. I also have students who want to go on the computers during study skills class. That’s never happened before.”

Summary

As demonstrated by the effectiveness report for the Clark County School District, *READ 180* proves to be a highly effective solution for delivering significant growth in reading achievement among middle school students. Based on the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) tests, students improved 2.4 grade levels on average, with the greatest gains achieved by at-risk students. In addition to these accelerated results, the analysis reveals that reading improvement was evident across gender, grade level, learning disability, and English-Language Learner (ELL) status. Furthermore, teacher comments show that after participation in *READ 180*, students are more confident and willing to participate in class.

With *READ 180*, schools which had previous difficulties accommodating struggling readers are now achieving dramatic improvements in student test scores and attitudes. *READ 180* solves the problems older struggling students encounter with reading. Through a flexible instructional model, leveled reading, and software that differentiates instruction, each student receives the appropriate and individualized instruction needed to become a successful reader.

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Scholastic Inc.
557 Broadway
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