

CASE STUDY

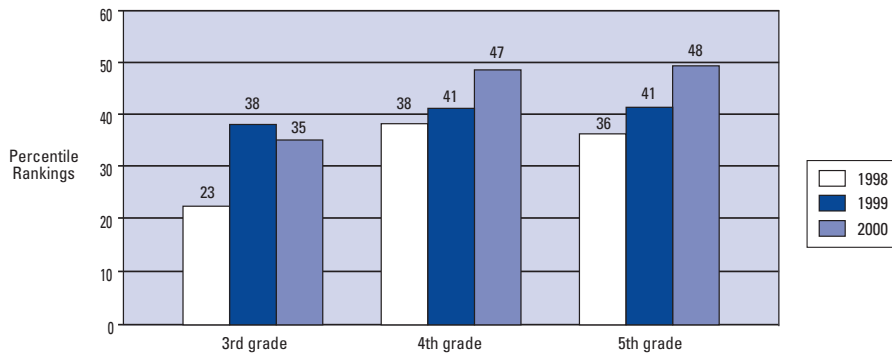
Alabama Elementary School Receives Governor’s Trophy for Most Improvement After Implementing Reading Renaissance™

Source: Audrey Fine, computer enrichment teacher

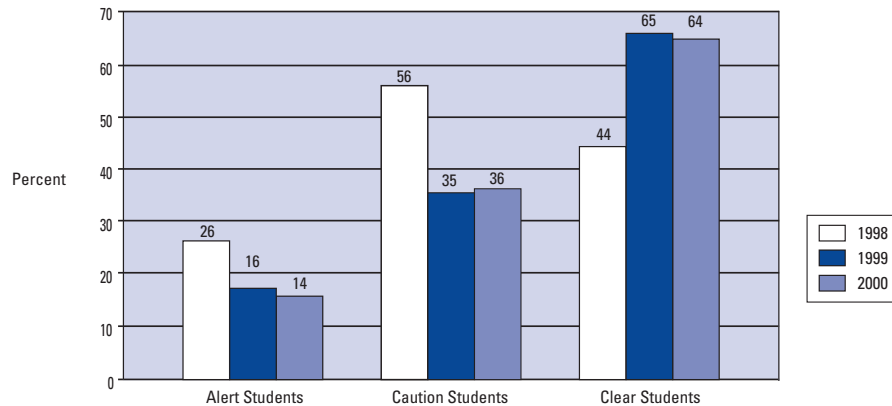
Introduction

Charles A. Brown Elementary School built a comprehensive reading program around the Reading Renaissance reading improvement program, and as a result, experienced a true renaissance among its teaching staff and students. Over three years of implementation, the school’s Stanford 9[®] reading scores increased significantly (Graph 1), while the percentage of students in the state’s “Alert” category decreased (Graph 2).

Graph 1: Reading Scores Improve with Implementation of Reading Renaissance (Stanford 9 Test Scores, 1998–2000)



Graph 2: Percentage of “Alert” Students Decreases with Reading Renaissance (Three-Year Academic Report, 1998–2000)



School Profile

Charles A. Brown Elementary School
 Students: 520, Grades K–5
 Birmingham, Alabama

Demographics

Title I
 Free or Reduced Lunch: 65%

Race/Ethnicity:

Black or African American: 100%

Educator Background

Audrey Fine has served as the computer enrichment teacher at Charles A. Brown Elementary School for four years. She received a bachelor’s degree in accounting at Birmingham-Southern College and a master’s degree in elementary education from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She also taught fourth grade for one year at Snow Rogers Elementary in Jefferson County. Fine has been a leader in implementing Accelerated Reader and Reading Renaissance at Brown Elementary.

(more information on back)

Study Description

In 1995, Charles A. Brown Elementary School purchased the Accelerated Reader™ (AR™) reading management program. Unfortunately, due to technical problems, only a small number of teachers implemented AR and the program was not fully utilized. In 1997–1998, based on Stanford 9 test scores, Brown Elementary was placed on “Academic Alert II” by the state of Alabama. An Academic Alert school or district is one where the majority of students have scored below the 23rd percentile. Alert II schools face state intervention if improvement measures are not evident within the next school year. During this time, Brown had 26% of its students in the “Alert” and 56% in the “Caution” categories. The school was required to develop a school-improvement plan along with an intensive self-study to determine the causes for low student performance.

One of the areas identified was the need for a comprehensive reading program in grades K–5. In April 1998, in order to meet the state’s requirements, Brown Elementary implemented STAR Reading™ computer-adaptive assessment software and upgraded its AR program. The school library/media specialists also purchased additional library books and AR quizzes. During the 1998–1999 school year, a computer lab was created and schedules for administering AR quizzes were established. Fine pretested second- through fifth-grade students with STAR Reading to place them in their appropriate zones of proximal development (ZPDs).

In the fall of 1998, Fine and the library/media specialists attended the *Introduction to Reading Renaissance* seminar in Montgomery, Alabama. Soon afterward, the school purchased Reading Renaissance videotapes and the entire faculty spent a professional development day watching and learning various techniques and strategies. Future Reading Renaissance professional development days were also scheduled.

Success is the best motivation, and to accomplish this, a Point Club Wall of Fame was set up in the main hallway of the school. Currently, a progression toward emphasizing reading goals rather than points is underway. Fourth- and fifth-grade students participated in the SWAT (Students With an Aptitude for Tutoring) program, helping K–2 students with quizzes and

reading. Parental involvement was also integrated—students’ TOPS reports were read and signed by their parents. Students who scored 80% or better on their TOPS reports were eligible for lunch with the principal. Teachers were also rewarding students with “extra” reading time. To further expedite their goals, Brown Elementary received a Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSR) grant in 1999, using Reading Renaissance in conjunction with Reading Recovery®.

Results

Charles A. Brown Elementary School implemented Reading Renaissance in 1998–1999. In that school year, it demonstrated a 35% increase in the number of students scoring at the 40th percentile and above on the Stanford 9. During the 1999–2000 school year, an additional two-percent increase was achieved. Grade-level percentile gains appear in Graph 1 and show a steady increase in reading scores.

As a result of its commitment to improvement, Brown reached the “Academic Clear” status, bypassing the “Alert I” and “Caution” categories by the end of the 1998–1999 school year. As a corollary, a decrease in the percentage of students within the “Alert” category was experienced (Graph 2). Fine believes that Reading Renaissance is the principal reason for the school reaching the “Academic Clear” status in such a short amount of time. In addition, Brown received one of nine Governor’s Trophies for improvement from the governor of Alabama. To date, Brown has maintained its “Academic Clear” status and is dedicated to incorporating School Renaissance throughout its curriculum.

Conclusion

Charles A. Brown Elementary School experienced an academic turnaround after building a comprehensive reading program around Reading Renaissance technology and practices. By enhancing its library and acquiring and effectively utilizing the tools of Reading Renaissance—AR reading management software, STAR Reading computer-adaptive assessment software, and Renaissance professional development—the school was able to significantly increase the school’s Stanford 9 reading scores while simultaneously decreasing the percentage of students in the state’s “Alert” category of academic performance.

¹Harcourt Assessment, Inc. (n.d.). *Stanford Achievement Test* (9th ed.). San Antonio, TX: Harcourt Assessment, Inc.



For more information, or for additional copies of this report, contact:

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