



Assessments Verify Reading Improvements for Middle and High School Students using MindPlay

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Teacher Newsletter

Middle and high school students identified with phonics deficits were placed on MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach (*MindPlay*) for the 2018-19 school year. These regular and special education students demonstrated outstanding reading improvement based on year-end assessments.

During the summer of 2018, we studied data to determine which students would be placed on *MindPlay*. Students with lower Lexile levels than expected were given the districts' computer based phonics screener at the end of the 2017-18 school year. In addition to those results, we also reviewed DIBELS (*Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*) assessment scores for students who had been with the district since elementary school.

When students began using *MindPlay*, most of them could not decode, which affected their fluency and comprehension. Most students were reading at the fluency K1 grade level, and some were at grade 2, based on the *MindPlay diagnostic assessment*. Our goal was to have students improve their decoding skills, and *MindPlay* seemed to be a perfect solution.

A total of 220 students from five middle and high schools worked on *MindPlay* for a 45 minute class period five days a week. District wide, I am very pleased with fidelity. Both teachers and students worked diligently to take advantage of all the program offers.

Outstanding Reading Improvement

We have seen gains in student performance. Lexile scores have improved. Students are better able to perform in classes across content areas. We also saw significant gains in state testing for some students.

LEAP Results:

We compared 2018 to 2019 Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) scores and were excited about the reading gains our students made in one year: 46% of our MindPlay students made gains on the LEAP assessment, and 25% actually grew a performance level on LEAP (for example, unsatisfactory to approaching basic, or approaching basic to basic).

Eight high school students grew a performance level on LEAP. These students previously scored Unsatisfactory for many years--the lowest achievement level on the LEAP. Growing an entire achievement level in one year was quite an accomplishment for them, given the complexity of the LEAP assessment. We speculate that students had previously lacked the decoding skills to perform at grade level. Once *MindPlay* repaired these phonics deficits, students were able to access and perform on the LEAP assessment grade level text. These students could already think on grade level; they simply needed the skills to decode written words.

Scholastic Reading Inventory Results:

On the Scholastic Reading Inventory, 62% of our MindPlay students made gains. Thirty-five percent finished at an Advancing level on the Scholastic

Phonics Inventory, and 42% are working at a Developing level, for a total of 77% improvement.

Fluency Results:

On the Mindplay fluency task, 50% of our students grew at least two grade levels.

Phonics Screener Results:

Our students are filling in their phonics gaps. Many have completed, or are near completing, their phonics curriculum. Students who did not complete the phonics curriculum are being placed on *MindPlay* again this year.

Motivating Students: An Opportunity to be Creative

Students who have historically struggled with reading tend to avoid the task. One high school teacher did a great job celebrating with the certificates the program provides: Every time the teacher posted a certificate on the wall, it was publicly announced, everybody clapped, and the student's picture was taken in front of it. One teacher taped one-dollar bills to the chalkboard. He picked a couple of kids who worked really hard every day and gave them a dollar bill to buy a snack. One teacher awarded students with free time to do something she approved if they completed their *MindPlay* time for the day. One sixth grade teacher had a sticker system that worked well for her class.

Praise for *MindPlay*

Middle and high school struggling readers have been resistant to intervention since elementary school. We think *MindPlay* is proving effective because it addresses each student's individual difficulties, with no time wasted on what the student already knows. The fact that students cannot move on until they have mastered a skill is another plus for them and the program.

Ease of use is one of the things I like best about *MindPlay*. We do not have staff in the middle and high schools who are knowledgeable about foundational skills in reading. We like that the program is computer based. Middle and high school students are embarrassed by their reading problems, and the program gives them an element of privacy. Having the licenses over the summer is another bonus. We send letters home to parents with their child's login information so students can work on *MindPlay* throughout the summer.

We are excited that our struggling readers will work with *MindPlay* again this year. *MindPlay* is, by far, the most effective program we've seen for middle and high school students.

*District Profile: 5500 Students in PreK-12 grades;
98% Free/reduced Lunch*

Teacher Newsletter

MindPlay’s new Intervention Report is designed to help teachers easily organize and target small group instruction. Although MindPlay’s adaptive technology automatically targets specific student support based on student errors, there are times that a teacher could, and should, intervene to help accelerate a student’s progress.



Section 1 of the report lists the “top” 3 groups of students who may benefit from specific teacher support. *These students have exceeded 2 times the expected time to complete their current lesson.* Section 2 is a class list of current Phonics, Grammar, and Phonemic Awareness lesson times. The student’s time in their current lesson is represented by a color-coded bar that indicates the extent by which the student has exceeded the time we would expect them to complete that lesson. Note: Each student has a different “expected” completion time based on their unique, individualized lesson completion average.

- **Green:** indicates that the student is not struggling and intervention is not needed
- **Yellow:** indicates that the student is taking longer than expected to complete the lesson and their progress should be monitored closely
- **Red:** indicates that the student is far beyond the expected time to complete the lesson and intervention is appropriate.