



Special Education and Tier III Students Significantly Improve Their Reading Skills on *MindPlay*

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Teacher Newsletter



When my principal introduced me to MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach (*MindPlay*), I thoroughly researched the program. My students need a lot of repetition and explicit instruction to learn to read fluently, and *MindPlay* appeared to provide both.

Because I go into the students' regular classrooms to work with them, I do not have enough time to implement the specific instruction in phonics they require, so I needed something they could do on their own. With *MindPlay*, I knew they would be successful if they used the program with fidelity.

Getting Started with MindPlay in the 2017-18 School Year

From January 2018 to the end of May 2018, 24 students stayed after school from 2:30 to 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday. During this study hour, we had a snack, did yoga to relax after a busy day, did *MindPlay* for 30 minutes, and did homework or played computer games for the remainder of the time. We tracked progress daily as a group which created an atmosphere of friendly competition amongst the students. I also offered rewards during our time together based on their individual progress.

We saw great results during those five months. One of my students went up two grade levels. The students were very motivated and liked spending time in our study hour. They also liked that they were being more successful in their classrooms. Their confidence

improved as they did better on tests and participated in classroom discussions about topics like nouns and verbs. As a result of their success, I requested that we use *MindPlay* this year.

2018-19 School Year Implementation

For the 2018-2019 school year, we implemented *MindPlay* a little differently. *MindPlay* is currently part of the students' Triple III period—individualized, intensive instruction.

My sixteen students with specific disabilities have been identified as having dyslexia, ADD, ADHD and high functioning autism. I have two second grade students; five third graders; five fourth graders, and four fifth graders. In addition, I also have six students in Tier III intervention who are in the third, fourth and fifth grades. Students are on *MindPlay* 30 minutes a day, five days a week. The Tier III students average 22 minutes a day because they work on *MindPlay* before or after school.

Overall Student Successes

Based on MindPlay Performance Levels for all of my 22 students, they have improved significantly. The first test (assessment) was given on August 1, 2018, and the latest test was given on March 4, 2019. All students' fluency and reading levels have increased.

Initially, I had 13 students in Critical, and now I have six; I had five students at Approaching and now I have eight; I had three students at Meeting and now I have six; and I had one student at Exceeding and now I have two students.

I am very pleased with the progress my students are making with *MindPlay*, especially the transfer of their reading skills to the regular classroom.

Outstanding Students

One third grade student began *MindPlay* at the kindergarten reading level, reading 70 words per minute (wpm). This student is currently reading 175 wpm at the second-grade level after 41 usages hours on *MindPlay*.

One fourth grade student began *MindPlay* at the kindergarten reading level, reading 70 wpm. This student is currently reading 199 wpm at the third-grade level after 40 usage hours on *MindPlay*.

One fifth grade student began *MindPlay* at the first grade reading level, reading 90 wpm. This student is currently reading 230 wpm at the fourth-grade level after 40 usage hours on *MindPlay*.

Data Chats and Rewards – Great Motivators

We track each student’s progress in their own folder, and every day students write what they worked on and the number of minutes they worked on *MindPlay*. Once a week they have a data chat with me. We look at their progress and their mistakes. Whatever skills they are not mastering, we go over and set a goal for the next week. For example, a student might need to work on nouns or the short “o” sound. The data chats are a great opportunity to reward students as well. Regardless of their progress, I want them to feel motivated and continue working hard to reach their goals. As a reward, students get to go to the treasure box, have lunch with a teacher or spend extra time on their favorite computer program. Data chats are an important part of each student’s success in *MindPlay*.

Praise for *MindPlay*

MindPlay is very easy to use. I do not have to say much or go over things with my students. They know exactly what they are going to be working on. They

also know that they have to attain mastery on each lesson in order to move forward.

The reports allow me to see where students are struggling and where they are progressing, especially the Error Report. We can have a conversation about the concept they missed, and I can teach them the same concept in a different way. I send the Parent Report to the parents every marking period, so they know how their children are doing. The Fluency Report allows me to go through all the comprehension skills with the students, and we talk about the skills they are not sure about, like story structure or paraphrasing.

I like the number of repetitions for each reading skill. *MindPlay* gives students multiple ways to learn a skill. If they miss a skill, they are going to work with it again and again until they attain mastery.

MindPlay is an outstanding program for students who struggle with reading. However, fidelity is critical. If students put the time in, teachers will see the results they want. I encourage teachers to give it a try because it makes a big difference. *MindPlay* allows teachers to pinpoint specific skills and remediate those skills through the reports. The concept of *MindPlay* peaked my interest at first, and after implementing the program, I have been very satisfied with the documentable progress my students have attained.

School Profile: 1,147 Students; Grades K-12; 33% Free/Reduced Lunch



Use of an Online Reading Intervention to Enhance the Basic Reading Skills of Community College Students

-Summary by Meredyth Beauer-Kealey

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Teacher Newsletter

The first purpose of this study was to examine the effects of MVRC on the reading and spelling achievement of community college students. The second purpose was to explore whether or not students' perceptions and attitudes changed after participation in the MVRC program.

The study included six participants; two males and four females between the ages of 18 and 34. All of the participants had a high school diploma and were attending a local community college for the first time. Four of the six participants were English Language Learners. The two participants whose native language was English had previously been diagnosed with a learning disability. Participants received an average of 20 hours of explicit instruction on MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach (MVRC).

Findings demonstrated significant results in reading and spelling as evident in the MVRC assessment of skills and the Woodcock Johnson Achievement IV (WJ ACH IV) tests of Word Attack, Spelling, and Word Reading Fluency. The participants also made gains on the targeted objectives prescribed by the MVRC program. In addition, findings demonstrated an increase in reading enjoyment and overall reading attitude.

The WJ ACH IV tests of Word Attack, Spelling, and Word Reading were used to measure gains in participant's reading skills. Results indicated that the participants made significant gains in phonics skills. In addition, word reading fluency increased indicating that word reading speed improved after

MVRC. Participants also made significant gains in spelling skills.

In addition to the gains indicated by results of the WJ ACH IV, participants also made gains on the targeted objectives prescribed by the MVRC program, as evident in the embedded assessment The Mindplay Universal Screener™. Specifically, participants made gains in fluency and comprehension. On average, students gained 1.61 grade levels over the 5-week time period of the MVRC intervention. In addition, participant's words read per minute also increased.

Student attitudes also improved in the category of reading enjoyment after use of MVRC. This was an important finding because if a student does not enjoy reading, he or she is unlikely to engage in reading activities. Participation in MVRC provided students with the basic skills needed to improve their reading ability and as a result, increased their reading enjoyment.

In addition, there was a positive correlation found between overall reading attitude and student gains in MVRC. This is an important finding because student's reading attitudes improved as they gained more skills in MVRC. Change in attitude may positively affect motivation and may encourage students to continue to pursue their education.

*Meredyth Bauer-Kealey & Nancy Mather (2018): Use of an Online Reading Intervention to Enhance the Basic Reading Skills of Community College Students, **Community College Journal of Research and Practice**, DOI:*

10:10.1080/10668926.2018.1524335. Link to full article: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10668926.2018.1524335>