

Implementation Evaluation of Read 180
2006-2007 School Year

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The Read 180 program is a computer-assisted literacy program that facilitates the targeted reading instruction of struggling students. This program is provided by Scholastic and has been implemented in Pinellas County schools since 1999. A formal, district-wide evaluation of the Read 180 program was conducted during the 2005-2006 school year. Evaluation results identified obstacles to the full implementation of the Read 180 program within the school district. Recommendations were offered to address barriers to full implementation of the program. A survey was completed by all Read 180 teachers in January of 2007 to examine the status of program implementation during the Fall semester of the 2006-2007 school year. These data form the basis of the present evaluation.

Results presented in the March 2006 evaluation of the Read 180 program in Pinellas County schools indicated that very few classes in the district had fully implemented the program. Difficulties with technology equipment and support were identified as central barriers to program implementation throughout the district. Difficulty reconciling the time structure of the Read 180 program with the time allotted for class periods within Pinellas County schools was also identified across elementary and secondary school levels. At the elementary school level, use of the Read 180 classrooms by classes statutorily required to comply with a different learning model presented a barrier to full implementation. Analysis of barriers to implementation at the secondary school level highlighted the effect of class disruption by students with behavioral difficulties.

An updated version of Read 180 entitled the Enterprise edition was scheduled for implementation throughout the district in the Fall of 2006. Provision of new equipment and updated technology support systems in conjunction with Enterprise was expected to address the difficulties with equipment and support identified in the district's March 2006 evaluation. Clear communication lines among Scholastic representatives, district administrative personnel, and Read 180 teachers was expected to address ambiguity in decisions regarding the time allotted for the program within Pinellas County schools. Issues specific to schools within either the elementary or secondary level would be addressed on a targeted basis within individual schools.

DESIGN

In January of 2007, all Read 180 teachers within Pinellas County schools completed a survey designed to evaluate the fidelity of implementation of the Read 180 program within the school district during the Fall of the 2006-2007 school year. Questions were designed to evaluate any barriers to implementation and to elicit feedback from teachers regarding potential solutions to difficulties that may exist.

Implementation fidelity was evaluated in terms of criteria developed during the course of the prior year's March 2006 evaluation. Scholastic identifies ten criteria upon which to evaluate program implementation (see Table 1). These criteria were modified through collaboration between Scholastic representatives and stakeholders within the district to provide a valid evaluation within the context of the Pinellas school system. The criteria for full, partial, and poor implementation were identified by elementary and secondary reading instruction stakeholders within the district. Use of identical criteria for March 2006 and the current evaluation provides a consistent means of continued monitoring of program implementation.

TABLE 1: IMPLEMENTATION INDICATORS

	SCHOLASTIC IMPLEMENTATION INDICATOR	PINELLAS COUNTY EVALUATION
1	Class schedule includes 90 minute blocks with 20 minutes of whole-group instruction at the beginning of each class period and 10 minutes of whole-group instruction at the end of each class period.	82-90 minutes with at least 10 minutes of whole-group instruction at the beginning of each class and 5 minutes of whole-group instruction at the end
2	Class Schedule includes three 20-minute rotations 5 days a week with no more than 5-7 students per group	less than 5 days is permissible given scheduling constraints
3	Sufficient working hardware (computers, headphones and cassette or CD players for all students to pass through the rotations each day the class meets	same
4	Adequate sets of Read 180 paperbacks, audiobooks, and topic CDs	same
5	Adequate training, professional development, and technical support to facilitate use of the program model	same
6	Appropriate configurations of furniture and equipment, including teacher workstation, independent reading area, computer stations, and whole/small group instruction areas	Not assessed through the present survey evaluation
7	Frequent (at least every 2-3 weeks) teacher use of the Scholastic Management Suite for tracking and monitoring student progress and reports	(use of SMS)
8	Regular teacher use of Read 180 instructional guides and reproducibles contained in Read 180 teacher and program guides	removed by the elementary and secondary reading departments
9	Administration of the SRI at the beginning, mid-point, and end of the period of student participation in Read 180	(use of SRI)
10	Student participation in Read 180 for at least a year	removed by the elementary and secondary reading departments

Elementary and secondary reading instruction stakeholders within Pinellas County schools independently identified the criteria necessary for Full, Partial, and Poor implementation of each Read 180 classroom (see Table 2). Both elementary and secondary personnel considered indicators 1 and 2 to be necessary for at least partial implementation. Stakeholders at both levels considered adherence to the structure of the Read 180 program, with modifications for Pinellas County scheduling constraints, to be essential. Elementary personnel considered indicator 3 to also be necessary, while secondary personnel considered indicators 5 and 9 to be necessary. Adherence to indicators 3 and 5 require the presence of sufficient hardware and technical support. Indicator 5 also prioritizes training and professional development, while indicator 9 prioritizes curriculum based assessment.

TABLE 2: IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL CRITERIA for ELEMENTARY and SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION		
	FULL	PARTIAL	POOR
ELEMENTARY CRITERIA	Indicators 1-7 and 9 present	Indicators 1-3 present	Indicators 1, 2, or 3 not present
SECONDARY CRITERIA	Indicators 1-7 and 9 present	Indicators 1,2,5, and 9 present	Indicators 1, 2, 5, or 9 not present

RESULTS

Overall, responses for 22 of the 109 teachers surveyed (20.2%) suggested that their classrooms were fully implemented (see Table 3). These teachers reported data consistent with the time structure of the Read 180 model. Equipment and technical support issues did not significantly interfere with delivery of Read 180 instruction. Responses of these teachers indicated receipt of sufficient professional development and training to support instruction within their classrooms. Engagement in monitoring of student progress through the Scholastic Management Suite and curriculum based assessment was reported as well.

Responses for 37 of the 109 teachers surveyed (33.9%) suggested that their classrooms were partially implemented, while responses for 50 teachers (45.9%) suggested that their classrooms were poorly implemented (see Table 3). Results presented in Table 4 indicate that responses of elementary and secondary school teachers were similar in that approximately half of the teachers' responses suggested that their classrooms were poorly implemented.

TABLE 3

READ 180 IMPLEMENTATION LEVELS		
	Number of Teachers	
Full Implementation	22	20.2%
Partial Implementation	37	33.9%
Poor Implementation	50	45.9%

TABLE 4

READ 180 IMPLEMENTATION by LEVEL				
	Elementary Teachers		Secondary Teachers	
Full Implementation	5	27.8%	17	18.7%
Partial Implementation	4	22.2%	33	36.3%
Poor Implementation	9	50.0%	41	45.1%

The 4 elementary school teachers whose responses were associated with partial implementation of the Read 180 program had indicated that the number of sets of paperbacks, audiobooks, and/or CDs present in their classrooms did not meet the criteria for full implementation (see Table 5). Among secondary school teachers, 9 of the 33 teachers with partially implemented classrooms did not have the required number of paperbacks, audiobooks and/or CDs, 8 had difficulties with inoperable hardware that significantly interfered with delivery of the Read 180 program, and 16 reported difficulties in both areas.

TABLE 5

REASONS FOR PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION by LEVEL

	Elementary Teachers		Secondary Teachers	
Indicator 3 (working hardware) not met			8	24.2%
Indicator 4 (paperbacks, audiobooks, CDs) not met	3	75.0%	7	21.2%
Indicators 3 and 4 not met			16	48.5%
Indicator 4 only 'Partially' met	1	25.0%	2	6.1%

Among teachers whose responses suggested that their classrooms were poorly implemented, 2 elementary school teachers and 10 secondary school teachers reported spending less than the required 20 minutes on one or more of the three rotations (small group, independent reading, computer instruction) within the Read 180 model (see Table 6).

TABLE 6

REASONS FOR POOR IMPLEMENTATION by LEVEL

	Elementary Teachers		Secondary Teachers	
Indicator 2 (3 20-minute rotations) not met	2	22.2%	10	24.4%
Indicator 3 (working hardware) not met	7	77.8%		
Indicator 5 (training, pro development, tech support) not met			25	61.0%
Indicators 2 and 5 not met			6	14.6%

Elementary and secondary levels differed in that elementary personnel regarded adherence to Indicator 3 as necessary for full implementation, while secondary personnel indicated adherence to indicator 5 as necessary. Seven elementary school teachers' classrooms were classified as being poorly implemented due to reported difficulties with working hardware that significantly interfered with delivery of Read 180 instruction (see Table 6). Among secondary school teachers, 25 reported difficulties with training, professional development, or technical support that significantly interfered with their ability to implement the Read 180 model. The majority of these cited difficulties accessing effective technical support when problems arose with hardware.

A subset of teachers clearly desired to have more frequent opportunities to receive training and professional development to enhance their ability to deliver the Read 180 curriculum, in most cases this appeared to be due to natural variation in teachers' comfort with the curriculum and desire to engage in training opportunities. While some teachers would desire further training others would likely view additional training as excessive. All teachers were required to participate in one day of training prior to implementation of the Enterprise curriculum. While the desire for further training opportunities by a subset of teachers was apparent, this was not considered to effect

program implementation unless a teacher stated that lack of professional support significantly hindered implementation of the program.

What have been the biggest challenges in implementing Read 180?

Apart from analysis of the specific implementation criteria, teachers were asked, "What have been the biggest challenges in implementing Read 180?" Teachers' responses generally fell into four categories. The first category of responses concerned the timing of implementation of the Enterprise curriculum. For example, one teacher stated that, "starting a new reading program in the middle of the school year was insane". Another teacher stated that, "to have Day 1 training in July and then implement the whole curriculum in November wasn't very well planned if you ask me".

A second major theme echoed problems with technology and equipment that were apparent throughout the evaluation. For example, one teacher stated, "At the beginning of the year not having the technology up and running made it very difficult to begin the program properly". Another indicated that, "the computers malfunctioning was very frustrating for my students".

The third theme involved difficulties with student motivation and behavior. One teacher echoed the sentiments of several others through stating that, "the students are bored after being in Read 180 before". With regard to behavior problems, several teachers indicated statements such as, "Students that have behavior problems coming in are a challenge to keep from disturbing others' learning". Several teachers also stated that, "keeping students on task in independent reading" can be difficult. One teacher stated his/her opinion that, "I hope that the district understands that it is not possible for our ESE students to get through the lessons in the time that has been allotted (if you want to present the curriculum as intended)."

The fourth theme echoed individual differences noted above in teachers' comfort level in using the program and desire for further training. One teacher, for example, stated that the biggest challenge to implementation was "my own comfort level, to begin with". Another teacher cited, "understanding and utilization of the new materials--taking the time to become familiar with everything". One group of teachers suggested that there was "not enough time for training and planning", while others indicated that the "training(s) have been very clear and it is easy to implement".

Would you recommend Read 180 to other teachers?

Despite the difficulties with implementation of the Read 180 program derived from teachers' survey responses, when asked whether or not they would recommend the program to other teachers only 6 of the 109 teachers stated that they would not. Approximately half of the 109 teachers were strongly supportive of the program and made statements such as

"YES! The kids truly benefit from the structure and support".

"I love this program and I have always championed it. I've seen my students' scores rise and their excitement when they complete a CD or a story in our R book".

"I absolutely love Read 180 and truly believe it could be a fantastic program if implemented correctly around the district. I would recommend it to anyone!"

The other half of teachers surveyed were supportive of the program under certain conditions. For example:

"I think it is a wonderful program. I would not recommend teaching it unless you have a lot of patience. Also, you need to have very strong organizational skills, classroom and behavior management skills".

"I would recommend it to teachers ready to work with a challenging population of students in a highly structured curriculum".

"Yes, but with some reservations. Only teachers who have a great sense of organization should try to teach it".

SUMMARY

Findings from the March 2006 evaluation of the Read 180 program in Pinellas County schools identified obstacles to full implementation of the Read 180 program within the district. Across elementary and secondary school levels, difficulties with technology and technical support interfered with full implementation of the Read 180 program. Ambiguity in expectations concerning the structure of the program was also identified as an obstacle to full implementation across grade levels. Management of behavior difficulties was also identified as a key obstacle to effective program implementation at the secondary level.

Provision of an updated Enterprise version of Read 180 by Scholastic was expected to address some of the barriers to full implementation identified in the March 2006 evaluation. The Enterprise version of the Read 180 program was not installed in most classrooms until the mid-point of the Fall semester of the 2006-2007 school year. Consequently, teacher responses to the survey upon which the present evaluation is based indicate that problems with hardware, computers, and technical support persisted for a significant period of the school year, impeding the ability to fully implement the program.

Increased clarity of expectations concerning the structure of the program can be seen in that almost all Read 180 programs satisfied the criteria for the first Indicator in the present evaluation. Almost all classes met for at least 82 minutes with at least 10 minutes of whole group instruction and 5 minutes of wrap-up. Further, mandatory training was provided to all Read 180 teachers.

Teacher responses suggested that behavior difficulties continued to present challenges within Read 180 classrooms. This appears to be a difficult problem with no simple solution as struggling readers who manifest behavior problems must receive reading instruction if not in Read 180 then in another classroom in which their behavior will present a challenge.

Teacher responses suggest that the highly structured, smaller classroom setting of Read 180 may provide an optimal environment for struggling readers who are motivated to learn. Teacher responses also suggest that for the program to be successful considerable support is necessary to address barriers to implementation of the program. As of the timeframe of the current evaluation which included the Fall of 2006, improvements in support provided to Read 180 classrooms had just begun to occur. Consequently, results of the current evaluation indicate that the majority of Read 180 classrooms remained poorly implemented during this timeframe. It is possible that implementation of the Read 180 program improved significantly following installment of the Enterprise system by Scholastic.

The 2007-2008 school year represents the first year in which the Read 180 program has begun the year under the new Enterprise system. It is possible that beginning the year under the Enterprise system may be associated with significant gains in implementation fidelity. These gains may present an improved overall experience for students and teachers alike within the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Continue to provide Read 180 to students within the district
 - a. The program has strong support from teachers who attest to its effectiveness
 - b. Improved implementation may result from provision of Enterprise
- 2) Continuous Support appears necessary for effective program implementation
 - a. Technology Support- each classroom should have a means of receiving effective, timely support for computer failures and replacement of broken equipment
 - b. Teacher Training- while some teachers feel very comfortable with the program and may perceive additional training as unnecessary, it appears that for a subgroup of teachers implementing Read 180 is challenging and any additional support to help familiarize teachers with the materials and the organization necessary to effectively implement Read 180 would likely be useful and appreciated
 - i. Common issues include ways to structure independent reading time to lessen the likelihood that students will become disruptive
 - ii. Providing intensive training in use of computer based applications
 - iii. Providing training in the management of behavioral difficulties
 - iv. Providing training to address issues of poor student motivation
 - c. Teacher Support beyond Trainings- additional support that can be accessed continually for issues related to difficulties in individual classrooms would likely help classes to run more smoothly

- d.* Behavioral Support- disruptive behavior is cited as a major obstacle to effective implementation of Read 180
 - i.* Some teachers describe Read 180 as a 'dumping ground' for students with behavioral difficulties and suggest a need to address placement issues
 - ii.* Some teachers would not recommend Read 180 based upon their experience with behavioral difficulties that they believe were not addressed effectively
- 3) Re-evaluate the program now that Enterprise has been implemented.
- a.* During the course of the current evaluation, classrooms were shifting from the old Read 180 to Enterprise.
 - b.* Open-ended responses indicate that there may have been significant improvement in technology and materials as a result of Enterprise. However, data from the current evaluation were not able to assess the full degree of improvement post-Enterprise.