

## Research and Outcomes Department

### Cherry Hill Public School District, Cherry Hill, NJ

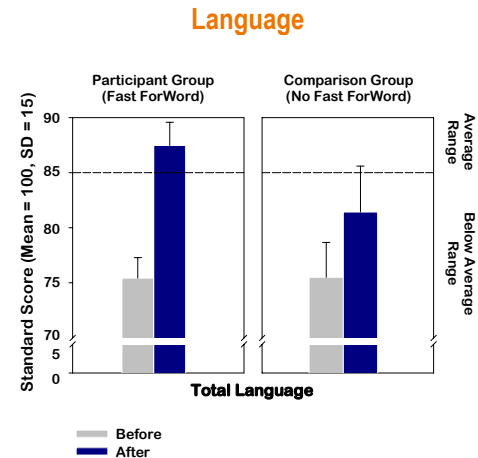
During the spring of 1999, personnel in the Cherry Hill Public School District in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, used an experimental study to evaluate the Fast ForWord Language product. School staff randomly assigned students to be in one of two groups: the first group used the Fast ForWord Language product; the second group served as the control group and took part in the standard classroom curriculum alone. The staff tested the students' language skills at the beginning and end of the study, and found significant improvements in the language and early reading skills of the group of students who used the Fast ForWord Language product relative to the control group.

#### Approach and Methodology

Seventy-three students identified as "struggling in phonemic awareness" were randomly assigned to one of two groups: fifty-one students used the Fast ForWord Language product in addition to the regular classroom curriculum; twenty-two students took part in the regular curriculum only. School staff tested the students' language and early reading skills before and after the study group used the Fast ForWord Language product.

At each participating school, educators were trained in current and established findings on the neuroscience of how phonemic awareness and the acoustic properties of speech impact rapid development of language and reading skills; methods for assessment of candidates for participation; the selection of appropriate measures for testing and evaluation; effective implementation techniques; approaches for using Progress Tracker reports to monitor student performance; and techniques for measuring the gains students have achieved after they have finished using the product. This helped ensure successful product implementation.

Staff in the Cherry Hill Public School District assessed their students' reading abilities using the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Third Edition (CELF-3).



*CELF-3 Mean Composite Language Scores of the Cherry Hill Public School District students before and after Fast ForWord participation show that students who used the Fast ForWord Language product made significantly greater improvements than those of a control group.*

**Pre- and post-assessments show that, on average, the students who used the Fast ForWord Language product made significant improvements in their language abilities and made significantly greater gains than the students who took part in the regular classroom curriculum alone.**

## Participation

The school district chose to use the Fast ForWord Language 100-Minute Protocol. Under this protocol, students participate 100 minutes per day, five days per week, for four to eight weeks. The schools achieved good participation: students used the Fast ForWord Language product for an average of 34 days over an average period of 52 calendar days, and completed an average of 71% of the product content.

## Assessment Results

Before Fast ForWord Language participation, Cherry Hill Public School District staff analyzed the language abilities of all of the students in the study with the CELF-3. Standard scores for the four CELF-3 subtests used were reported. On average, the students made significant improvements in all four of the subtests. These subtests are recognized by the Institute for the

Development of Educational Achievement as an appropriate measure for improvement in vocabulary skills. Vocabulary skills are an essential component of early reading.

Overall language abilities were also analyzed with the Total Language scores. On average, both the students in the Fast ForWord group and the students in the control group scored more than one standard deviation below the mean in their CELF-3 Total Language scores. After Fast ForWord Language participation, on average, students saw significant improvements in their average Total Language scores, gaining over 10 points and improving into the average range. During the same time period, on average, students in the control group (who did not use the Fast ForWord product) also saw significant improvements in their average Total Language scores, but saw approximately half the gains of the Fast ForWord group—and remained in the below-average range.

## Discussion

Many school districts look for ways to supplement their instruction for under-performing students—products which improve the curriculum and instruction of students reading below grade level.

These findings from the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF-3)—combined with the students' progress through the Fast ForWord Language product—demonstrate that, within the Cherry Hill Public School District, an optimal learning environment, coupled with a focus on cognitive and early reading skills, can help under-performing grade school students make significant improvements in early reading skills.

To find out more about this study, and how **Fast ForWord products** can benefit students in your classroom or district, please visit [www.scilearn.com/resultsreports](http://www.scilearn.com/resultsreports).

