SCHOLASTIC
Professional Paper

Struggling Middle School Readers: Successful, Accelerating Intervention

Dr. Rosemary Papalewis
California State University,
Sacramento

READ180®

How effective is *READ 180* with middle school readers? This paper, written by Dr. Rosemary Papalewis, evaluates the impact of a quasi-experimental study with 8th graders in the Los Angeles Unified School district and gives an answer to this question: very effective.

The results demonstrated that students in *READ 180* revealed significant growth of over three NCEs in Reading and almost two NCEs in Language Arts on the SAT-9.

To ensure that any reading gains by *READ 180* could be demonstrated, a treatment group that received *READ 180* was compared to a matched comparison group. This matched comparison group consisted of students that were similar to students in the treatment group in gender, ethnicity, language proficiency, and their pretest SAT-9 reading scores. Two years of Reading and Language Arts scores for both groups (1999 through 2001) were then analyzed for this study. While the *READ 180* students' scores rose as detailed above, the comparison group lost ground in both Reading and Language Arts.

The results of those noted as having limited English proficiency are also of special significance. The gains for these students were essentially identical to those of the group of *READ 180* participants as a whole. As Dr. Papalewis writes, "Clearly, the *READ 180* strategies are effective for English language learners."

From Papalewis, R. (March 2004). Struggling Middle School Readers: Successful, Accelerating Intervention. Reading Improvement, 41 (1), pp. 24-37

Rosemary Papalewis

Struggling Middle School Readers: Successful, Accelerating Intervention

Dr. Rosemary Papalewis
California State University,
Sacramento

The primary focus of this study was to evaluate the impact of an intervention reading program on students repeating the 8th grade in a large urban inner-city school district. Two years of Reading and Language Arts scores (n=537) were analyzed (NCE scores) across various demographic variables (attendance, English language proficiency, and race/ethnicity/gender). A group of students, not participating in any special intervention, matched on pretest means, gender, ethnicity, and language proficiency, was chosen for comparison purposes. Overall, the participants made significant gains of over three (3) normal curve equivalents in Reading and almost two (2) normal curve equivalents in Language Arts (SAT-9), while the comparison group scored significantly lower (on the posttest).

Purpose of the Study

Poor reading skills in children are the prevalent indicators of dismal public school practices. Poor readers are the result of many factors. Blame for producing poor readers is sometimes leveled on variables schools had little or no impact on—poverty, English as a second language, poor attendance, etc. Research (Moats, June 1999; Papalewis, March 2002) suggests that teachers and principals, and the curriculum they choose, tied to strong teacher professional development, can and do make a difference. What is known is that if a student cannot read by the 8th grade, the likelihood of dropping out of school is almost a given. By today's standards, without a high school diploma, one cannot enter military service or work in many entry level service-oriented jobs.

The primary focus of this study was to evaluate the impact of an intervention reading program on students repeating the 8th grade in a large urban inner-city school district. The *No Child Left Behind* act of 2001 holds schools accountable for the improvement of all students measured through academic achievement indicators. The importance of instructional efficacy is discussed in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) and is generally addressed in studies or basal reading programs conducted by Stein (1993) and Stein, Johnson, & Gutlohn (Sept.–Oct. 1999). Although no operational definition of instructional efficacy in early reading instruction has been tested to date, proposed elements of the concept include: 1) A pedagogically well-designed developmental instructional plan that extends across days and weeks; 2) A method of monitoring progress to allow for adjustment of the plan as needed; 3) Manageable, effective, classroom-friendly instructional guidance (Snow, et al., 1998); 4) Clear, distinguished key and optional activities (Snow, et al., 1998); 5) High percentage of potential accuracy in student readers, as well as in supplementary support materials (Stein, et al., 1999); and 6) Sufficient emphasis on key instructional categories (Stein, 1993).

It is clear that when schools turn from remediation to intervention strategies, poor readers accelerate their growth more quickly. Intervention strategies reflect a powerful philosophy shift in ensuring school practices are meant for all students, especially older poor readers. The earlier the intervention strategies, in primary grades, the better it is to eliminate low performing readers. Torgesen & Burgess (1998) support evidence that only one child in eight who experiences serious reading difficulties at the end of first grade ever attains reading skills within the average range. Neal & Kelly (2002) note that in the past, extra help for struggling upper-grade readers was considered remediation. They characterize this as the school's "wait and let fail" approach to poor readers—only after students demonstrate a two-year discrepancy to grade level skills will supplemental remedial instruction be sought. Remedial instruction is characterized by students doing isolated worksheet/workpackage activities, mostly monitored by paraprofessionals or volunteers.

Neal & Kelly (2002) draw an important distinction between intervention and remediation, by identifying six characteristics of successful intervention programs that accelerate reading skills in older students: 1) Consider individual student needs; 2) Implement an apprenticeship model of teaching and learning; 3) Select appropriate materials; 4) Establish a focus on accelerative instruction; 5) Consider the role of fluent responding; and 6) Provide for affirmation of success.

Torgesen (spring/summer 1998) states that once reading instruction begins, the best predictor of future reading growth is current reading achievement, and the most critical indicators of good progress in learning to read during the early elementary period are measures of word reading skills. Adequate monitoring of the growth of word reading ability should include out-of-context measures of word reading ability, phonetic decoding ability (as measured by the ability to read non-words), and word reading fluency. In *Teaching Children to Read* (National Reading Panel (NRP), 2000) fluency is one of the several critical factors necessary for reading comprehension.

Reading practice is an important component to fluency, especially guided repeated oral practice and independent silent reading. The NRP notes these skills required for reading comprehension skills: vocabulary development, intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reading and the text, and the preparation of teachers.

Current researchers (Lovett, Lacerensa, Borden, Frijters, Seteinbach, & DePalma, 2000; Torgesen, Alexander, Wagner, Rashotte, Voeller, Conway, & Rose, 2001) indicate that to improve reading skills in older children with serious reading problems requires more intensive paced reading with explicit decoding emphasis than is typically observed in public school intervention programs. Reading difficulty stems from many avenues among older readers, such as: 1) poor word identification; 2) guessing on words based on the context; 3) decoding unfamiliar words; and 4) lack of fluent word recognition. Also, reading comprehension tends to move up to a level that is consistent with their general verbal skills (Torgesen, Rashotte, Alexander, & MacPhee, 2002).

Torgesen, et al. (2002) feel explicit instruction in phonemic decoding skills to increase older students' sight word vocabulary is generally ineffective in producing lasting reading improvement with older children who have serious reading difficulties. Additionally, children from low socioeconomic homes may also suffer from lower verbal skills and that language comprehension difficulties result from restricted vocabulary and background knowledge. Increasing vocabulary development through focused intervention strategies and methods can be as powerful as doing so with comprehension strategies. We know poor readers are more likely to come from homes of poverty and where English is a second language.

What role do schools play? Snow, Burns, & Griffin (1998) found that poor readers in elementary school going to middle school are poor readers, because of inadequate instruction in primary grades. Lyon, Fletcher, Shaywitz, Shaywitz, Torgesen, Wood, Schulte, & Olson (2001) state there is no evidence that children who are poor readers, primarily because of limited cognitive abilities, and those whose lack of reading skill can be attributed primarily to poor instruction, actually require different kinds of remedial instruction. Late intervention (Neal & Kelly, 2002) takes a proactive, catch-up stance toward the specific learning needs of students. The essential ingredient for intervention programs is the rigor of delivering intervention instruction for increased acceleration to attain function levels of their peers.

Reading intervention research provides evidence most children with remedial problems: 1) have poor skilled word identification; 2) rely on guessing the word based on context; and 3) phonemic decoding of unfamiliar words and limited fluency (Wagner, Torgesen, Rashotte, Hecht, Barker, Burgess, Donahue, & Garon, 1997).

Methods and Procedures

In the 2000–2001 academic year, designated 8th-grade students received specialized instruction to improve their reading skills. Under the auspices of the Intensive Academic Support program (IAS), the *READ 180* program from Scholastic Inc. was implemented.

READ 180 is a reading intervention program created as a result of more than ten years of research by experts at Vanderbilt University. Through a collaborative research effort between Vanderbilt and the Orange County Public School System in Florida, the *READ 180* pilot was used with more than 10,000 students between 1994 and 1999. Research on the pilot project indicated students participating in the Orange County research program experienced quantifiable improvement in the areas of reading achievement, especially positive attitudes and behaviors, and overall higher school achievement (Papalewis, January 2002).

READ 180 is designed to support teachers in their efforts to improve reading achievement for students reading below grade level in the upper elementary and middle grades. *READ 180* utilizes an intensive reading intervention approach to:

- Deliver individualized, adjusted reading instruction to improve students' reading skills;
- Provide practice and application of skills in multiple contexts to increase reading achievement; and
- Support and motivate students as they progress toward becoming lifelong readers and learners.

READ 180 combines research-based reading practices with the effective use of technology, offering students an opportunity to achieve reading success through a combination of instructional, modeled, and independent reading components. The program incorporates instructional decision-making procedures and state-of-the-art instructional materials to ensure each student's individual needs are addressed and for each to attain maximum achievement. This model combines the following elements:

- 90-minute daily class periods;
- Reduced class size of 15 students per class;
- Students engage in daily instructional reading using *READ 180* Software;
- Students receive daily modeled or independent reading practice;
- Students participate daily through individual or Small-Group Instruction;
- Distinct classroom areas are designated for each type of instructional activity;
- A computer area with five computers for the *READ 180* instructional software;
- A comfortable reading area with cassette players and headphones for listening to the *READ 180* Audiobooks; and
- A worktable for teacher directed Small-Group Instruction.

The *READ 180* approach begins with 20 minutes of whole-class literacy instruction in which the teacher and students engage in shared reading, read aloud, or do direct instruction skill lessons. Next, the students are split into three groups and each group participates in three 20-minute rotations. During each of the three rotations the teacher works directly with one small group of students, while the remaining two groups work independently at the computer or reading stations. After the three rotations, the instruction ends with a 10-minute wrap-up for students to reflect on their daily performance.

To assist the teacher in developing lesson plans and monitoring student progress, the *READ 180* instructional components include the following materials: Teacher's Guides, Reading Strategies, and Resource books for comprehension and writing support. The Scholastic Management Suite software provides detailed progress reports allowing teachers to identify skills mastered and areas for improvement. The Scholastic Reading Inventory software provides an assessment of overall reading achievement and uses the Lexile Framework to facilitate assignment of program materials by matching student levels to text materials.

Student Selection and Teacher Training

For this study, students from a large urban inner-city school district were selected for the program based on SAT-9 scores, report cards, and teacher recommendation. Two specific criteria were used by the schools for the 8th graders designated as IAS students: A grade of D or F in 8th-grade English and a non-passing grade on the direct writing performance test. Most of the IAS students were repeating the 8th grade. These 8th grade students began receiving the *READ 180* program during the 2000–2001 school year. The one common denominator was the student was a struggling reader.

During the 2000–2001 implementation year Scholastic provided consultant training support for *READ 180* teachers. These sessions started in May 2000 and continued through May 2001, and usually consisted of one half-day or one whole-day program. Over 150 teachers received some level of training. Topics of the training included:

- What is *READ 180* and How Does it Work?;
- The First Two Weeks of School;
- Placement and Pacing;
- Whole-Class Instruction;
- Instructional Reading;
- Small-Group Instruction;
- Modeled and Independent Reading; and
- Whole-Class Wrap-Up.

Content Analysis of Classroom Observations

In order to verify implementation of the *READ 180* curriculum, a trained observer visited 25 IAS 8th-grade classrooms in 21 middle schools in a large urban school district. The one-hour visitations occurred May through June 2001. The *READ 180* Observer Evaluation Forms were used. Almost all of the classes were 90-minute class periods where whole-group instruction was observed. All of the classes were 15–20 students in size. Core class activities were observed in 19 of the classrooms, as was the class-ending wrap-up activity. In general, there was evidence that almost all of the classes observed modeled reading using audiobooks, independent reading using leveled literature, video segments, and student participation in direct instruction writing lessons. And for over half of the classrooms observed, the *READ 180* program was operating well. In several classrooms, use of student data to improve instruction needed attention and monitoring by teachers.

Findings

Baseline Participation Data

For the students who began participating in the *READ 180* program in September of 2000, data were collected for the spring 1999 testing period and the spring 2000 testing period (n=622). Tables 1 and 2 present the results of that testing in general, across gender, language classification, and ethnic group.

Table 1 displays the Reading and Language Arts Normal Curve Equivalent (NCEs) scores for the *READ 180* participants for 1999–2000 and the previous year (1998–1999). Scores for these two years serve as baseline data. As shown, both years' NCEs scores in Reading and Language Arts are approximately equal in the low 30s. A repeated measures analysis showed no significant difference in NCEs for either content areas.

Further analysis for the two years in Reading and Language Arts indicate a degree of variability in the scores. In both areas for the years, approximately 35% of the students scored between 18 and 35 NCEs. Approximately 30% score lower than 18 and 35% score higher than 35. For 1999–2000, the *READ 180* students' percentile average was 18, below the district average for 8th graders of 32. In Language Arts, the *READ 180* student percentile average was 20, also below the district average percentile of 36. Clearly, the *READ 180* participants were those students needing additional academic intervention.

Table 1

Reading and Language Arts NCEs Baseline
N=622

READ 180	1998–1999			1999–2000			
	NCE Mean	(S)	Percentile Mean*	NCE Mean	(S)	Percentile Mean*	**District Percentile
Reading	31.48	(21.03)	19	31.02	(19.53)	18	32
Language Arts	32.04	(21.19)	20	32.39	(21.46)	20	36

* Converted from Mean NCEs
** Source: http://www.cde.ca.gov

Table 2

Reading and Language Arts Performances Baseline
By Demographic Variables

READ 180		READING NCEs				LANGUAGE NCEs			
		1998–1999		1999–2000		1998–1999		1999–2000	
ETHNICITY	N	MEAN	(S)	MEAN	(S)	MEAN	(S)	MEAN	(S)
Asian	16	51.94	(19.52)	50.41	(18.20)	55.74	(22.85)	61.48	(22.17)
African American	85	43.03	(21.39)	40.87	(22.40)	43.23	(22.79)	41.28	(22.77)
Hispanic	492	27.79	(19.39)	27.60	(17.52)	28.05	(18.82)	29.01	(19.87)
White	18	45.76	(18.39)	50.05	(14.86)	51.63	(20.27)	41.68	(14.13)
Filipino	10	45.76	(19.59)	50.75	(23.04)	60.71	(20.86)	58.98	(18.53)
Pacific Islander*	1								
TOTAL	622	31.48	(21.03)	31.02	(19.53)	32.04	(21.19)	32.39	(21.46)
GENDER									
Male	381	30.32	(20.15)	28.93	(19.07)	29.71	(19.93)	30.57	(20.33)
Female	241	33.32	(22.27)	34.31	(19.82)	35.72	(22.60)	35.28	(22.87)
TOTAL	622	31.48	(21.03)	31.02	(19.53)	32.04	(21.19)	32.39	(21.46)
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSIFICATION									
LEP**	272	22.03	(16.89)	21.10	(14.89)	19.98	(12.75)	22.33	(16.08)
RFEP***	162	35.70	(20.50)	37.90	(17.92)	40.00	(21.04)	40.86	(21.01)
IFEP****	29	47.71	(20.71)	42.62	(21.09)	47.00	(20.14)	44.58	(23.35)
NONE LISTED	159	40.38	(21.09)	38.85	(21.15)	41.83	(22.61)	38.76	(22.44)
TOTAL	622	31.48	(21.03)	31.02	(19.53)	32.04	(21.19)	32.39	(21.46)

* To maintain confidentiality, categories with less than five students are not reported.
**LEP=Limited English Proficient
***RFEP=Reclassified Fluency English Proficient
****IFEP=Identified Fluency English Proficient

Table 2 displays the data regarding Reading and Language Arts NCEs across the demographic variables. The variation across group means by ethnicity is very apparent. For example, in Reading for 1999–2000, Hispanic participants (79% of the group) scored at a mean of 27.60. In contrast, for the three small groups of White, Asian, and Filipino students in Reading for the same year, the mean exceeded 50,000 NCEs. Students identified as African American scored at 40.87 NCEs.

As would be expected, students identified as Limited English Proficient scored the lowest of all language groups in Reading for 1999–2000 (21.10 NCEs).

Not shown in Table 2 are the percentile scores for the Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. In Reading, LEP *READ 180* students had a percentile mean of 9, compared to the district 8th-grade LEP average of 13. In Language Arts, *READ 180* students' converted mean percentile was 9, compared to 15, the district average. Again, these results were evidence of the need for additional learning opportunities for the selected students.

Final Participant Data

In the spring of 2001, all *READ 180* participants were tested. In October of 2001, matched scores (1999–2000 and 2000–2001) were reported for 537 participants. This indicates that some students left the IAS program or did not have both 1999–2000 and 2000–2001 scores. While the data presented in Tables 1 and 2 represent essentially the same students, they are not matched with the 537 participants who appear in Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Table 3 presents attendance and absence data across the various demographic variables for *READ 180* students. The average days attended for *READ 180* students were 147 (approximately 82% of the 180 days of the school year). The variability within and across ethnic and language groups was extremely large indicating that some of the students attended school less than 60% of the days available.

Table 4 presents the 1999–2000 and 2000–2001 matched scores for *READ 180* participants. For Reading, *READ 180* students gained approximately 3 NCEs from one to the next (significant gain $p<.05$). In Language Arts as well, *READ 180* students gained approximately 2 NCEs, (also a significant gain, $p<.05$). District percentile ranks remained approximately equal from 2000
(Table 1) to 2001 (Table 4) at 33 in Reading and 36 in Language Arts. The *READ 180* students, however, gained four percentile ranks in Reading and three percentile ranks in Language Arts.

Table 5 presents the Reading and Language Arts NCEs categorized by ethnicity, gender, and language classification. Again, the means across ethnic groups and English language classification vary greatly for both Reading and Language Arts.

Table 3

Demographic Variables and Attendance *Final*

READ 180			Days Attended*		Excused Absences*		Non-Excused Absences*	
ETHNICITY	N	%	MEAN	(S)	MEAN	(S)	MEAN	(S)
Asian	15	3%	172	(20)	5	(13)	1	(4)
African American	75	14%	150	(40)	9	(11)	7	(10)
Hispanic	421	78%	145	(38)	14	(13)	7	(11)
White	15	3%	157	(22)	15	(16)	7	(9)
Filipino	9	2%	160	(38)	6	(7)	3	(5)
Pacific Islander**	2	<1%						
TOTAL	537		147	(38)	12	(13)	7	(11)
GENDER								
Male	329	61%	146	(37)	12	(13)	7	(10)
Female	208	39%	147	(39)	13	(14)	7	(12)
TOTAL	537		147	(38)	13	(13)	7	(11)
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSIFICATION								
LEP***	225	42%	142	(37)	15	(14)	8	(12)
RFEP****	143	27%	143	(34)	11	(13)	5	(8)
IFEP*****	24	4%	147	(34)	14	(12)	7	(9)
NONE LISTED	145	27%	145	(42)	12	(12)	8	(12)
TOTAL	537		147	(38)	13	(13)	7	(11)

* Rounded
** To maintain confidentiality, categories with less than five students are not reported.
***LEP=Limited English Proficient
****RFEP=Reclassified Fluency English Proficient
*****IFEP=Identified Fluency English Proficient

Table 4

Reading and Language Arts NCEs *Final*
N=537

READ 180	1999–2000			2000–2001			
	NCEs		Percentile	NCEs		Percentile	District
	Mean	(S)	Mean*	Mean	(S)	Mean*	Percentile**
Reading	32.10	(17.9)	20	35.24**	(19.1)	24	33
Language Arts	33.29	(21.8)	21	35.08**	(21.1)	24	36

Source for district percentile: http://data.cae.ca.gov/
* Converted from Mean NCEs
** Correlated "t" test, p<.05

Reading and Language Arts Performance *Final*
By Demographic Variables

READ 180		READING NCEs				LANGUAGE NCEs			
		1999–2000		2000–2001		1999–2000		2000–2001	
ETHNICITY	N	MEAN	(S)	MEAN	(S)	MEAN	(S)	MEAN	(S)
Asian	15	54.38	(17.8)	57.14	(27.6)	62.21	(22.8)	51.47	(32.1)
African American	75	36.85	(20.5)	39.61	(23.9)	42.64	(22.4)	41.78	(29.9)
Hispanic	421	29.75	(15.9)	32.93	(16.1)	29.62	(20.1)	32.70	(19.2)
White	15	44.22	(23.0)	46.19	(29.9)	43.58	(14.67)	44.38	(25.4)
Filipino	9	49.42	(26.4)	54.97	(21.9)	61.56	(17.7)	51.86	(30.6)
Pacific Islander*	2								
TOTAL	537	32.10	(17.9)	35.24	(19.1)	33.29	(21.8)	35.08	(21.1)
GENDER									
Male	329	30.57	(17.5)	34.82	(17.9)	31.19	(20.6)	33.77	(20.0)
Female	208	34.55	(18.4)	35.90	(20.9)	36.59	(23.2)	37.14	(22.7)
TOTAL	537	32.10	(17.9)	35.24	(19.1)	33.29	(21.8)	35.08	(21.1)
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSIFICATION									
LEP	225	25.36	(11.4)	28.37	(11.36)	23.14	(15.7)	25.07	(14.2)
RFEP	143	37.87	(18.0)	40.76	(19.92)	41.45	(22.1)	43.96	(20.7)
IFEP	24	37.83	(27.7)	43.70	(22.22)	44.58	(25.5)	42.73	(27.6)
NONE LISTED	145	35.95	(20.8)	39.08	(23.5)	39.12	(22.7)	40.63	(23.0)
TOTAL	537	32.10	(17.9)	35.24	(19.11)	33.29	(21.8)	35.08	(21.1)

* To maintain confidentiality, categories with less than five students are not reported.

Table 6

Reading and Language Arts NCEs *Final*
READ 180 Students and Comparison Group Students

		READING NCEs				LANGUAGE ARTS NCEs			
		1999–2000		2000–2001		1999–2000		2000–2001	
	N	Mean	(S)	Mean	(S)	Mean	(S)	Mean	(S)
READ 180	537	32.10*	17.9	35.24*†	19.1	33.29*	21.8	35.08*†	21.1
Comparison Group	536	32.44	16.3	25.78†	14.3	33.10	17.8	30.44†	18.1

* Correlated "t" test, p<.05, *READ 180* 1999–2000 v. 2000–2001
† Independent "t" test, *READ 180* v. Comparison Group 2000–2001 Scores, p<.05

Table 6 depicts the comparison group means (1999–2000) in Reading and Language Arts as approximately equal to the *READ 180* 1999–2000 means. [Note: The comparison group was selected from all other non-IAS 8th graders from the same district. Selection of the comparison group was based on similar 1999–2000 test scores with approximately the same percentages of gender, ethnicity, and language proficiency as the *READ 180* students.]

As shown, the comparison group students lost ground (NCEs) in both Reading (32.44 to 25.78) and Language Arts (33.10 to 30.44) from 1999–2000 to 2000–2001. *In comparison,* READ 180 *students made significant gains in both areas. An independent "t" test between the* READ 180 *students and comparison students for 2000-2001 showed significant differences in NCEs in both Reading and Language Arts.*

In summary, *READ 180* students significantly improved in Reading and Language Arts from pre (1999–2000) to post (2000–2001), while the comparison group students lost ground. As a result, 2000–2001 *READ 180* students had significantly higher gains than the comparison group students who started at the same level in May 1999–2000.

Overall, the *READ 180* participants made significant gains of over three (3) Normal Curve Equivalents in Reading and almost two (2) Normal Curve Equivalents in Language Arts (SAT-9). A group of students, not participating in any special intervention, matched on pretest means, gender, ethnicity, and language proficiency, was chosen for comparison purposes. Not only did the *READ 180* participants score significantly higher than the comparison group, the comparison group lost ground from pre (May 2000) to post (May 2001).

Detailed analysis of the *READ 180* group revealed that the participants were primarily identified as Hispanic (78%), with 42% noted as Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 27% who had been recently reclassified out of LEP. These gains were essentially identical to those of the rest of the *READ 180* participants. Clearly, the *READ 180* strategies are effective for English-Language Learners (ELL).

Implications

In this study, *READ 180* findings indicate that quantifiable improvement occurred in the reading achievement of participating students. Results of the data analysis indicated that *READ 180* participants made gains in Reading and Language Arts during the year they were in the program that were significantly higher than an equivalent group of students who did not participate in the program (Papalewis, March 2002).

Today's public schools are driven by standards and assessment measures meant to cure the ills perceived by anxious elected officials and parents. The Bush administration (in the *No Child Left Behind* act, 2001), expects students, especially those of color, to be academically tracked to examine the effectiveness of texts and materials as well as teacher professional training. The *READ 180* program's effectiveness with urban school 8th graders (mostly grade repeaters and almost half limited English language speakers), is significant. Intervention programs are overdue in public schools, especially for urban, low socioeconomic level schools with older students that need help from credentialed teachers to accelerate their reading skills.

The significant growth in reading for these students lends further credence to intervention research (Lovett, et al., 2000; Rashotte, MacPhee, & Torgesen, 2001; Torgesen, et al., 2001) that implies it is possible to accelerate the development of reading skills in struggling older readers, at a quicker pace than typically observed in public schools. As found in this study, *READ 180* is an intensive and accelerative reading program for struggling older readers.

Older students who read poorly and are from low socioeconomic or minority status not only have difficulty with fluent reading, but with general verbal skills. Snow, et al., (1998) stated that many children leave elementary school as poor readers because they did not receive adequate instruction. Compounded with second language backgrounds, the reading growth for the students in this study were quite remarkable. This research suggests that *READ 180* provides strong teacher professional development and ongoing support (Neal & Kelly, 2002), lack of which is found in the criticism of public school practices with poor readers (Torgesen, et al., 2001).

In addition to an emphasis on accountability, the NCLB act promotes reading programs that are scientifically based, matching well-trained teachers with necessary tools utilizing sound instructional strategies. Results from this study show that the intervention program was particularly effective with students whose native language is other than English (ELL students). In addition to the NCLB (2001) noted components of phonetic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, the *READ 180* strategies (Papalewis, April 2002) for students included:

- Background information to build mental models for the text;
- Text captioning to allows students to read along with the modeled fluency lessons;
- Phonological/morphological structure of English language;
- Literature and expository materials that reflect cultural diversity;
- Decoding tips with modeled practice; and
- Opportunities for reading related text.

For ELL teachers, *READ 180* strategies are particularly applicable. In *Leadership on Purpose: Promising Practices for African-American and Hispanic Students* (2002), Papalewis and Fortune found that a key component of high achieving schools with large percentages of Hispanic students is professional teacher development geared specifically to the English-language learner.

References

Lovett, M.W., Lacerensa, L., Borden, S.L., Frijters, J.C., Seteinbach, K.A., & DePalma, M. (2000). Components of effective remediation for developmental reading disabilities: Combining phonological and strategy-based instruction to improve outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92, 263–283.

Lyon, G.R., Fletcher, J.M., Shaywitz, S.E., Shaywitz, B.A., Torgesen, J.K., Wood, F.B., Schulte, A., & Olson, R. (2001). Rethinking learning disabilities. In C.E. Finn, A.J. Rotherham, & C.R. Hokanson, Jr. (Eds.). *Rethinking special education for a new century*, 213–232. New York: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Moats, L.C. (June 1999). *Teaching reading is rocket science: What expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do.* Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers.

National Reading Panel (2000). *Teaching children to read: report from the National Reading Panel.* Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Available Online: www.nationalreadingpanel.org/publications/summary.htm

Neal, J.C. & Kelly, P.R. (April–June 2002). Delivering the promise of academic success through late intervention. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 18, 2, 101–117.

Papalewis, R. (April 2002). *English Language Development and* READ 180 *Intervention*. A policy paper written for F. Alexander, New York City: Scholastic Inc.

Papalewis, R. (March 2002). *Results and validation: The Los Angeles Unified* READ 180 *study*. A presentation made at the Scholastic Intervention Convention, San Francisco, California.

Papalewis, R. (January 2002). *A study of the intensive academic support program and* READ 180 *in the Los Angeles Unified School District.* Independent consultant hired by Scholastic Inc. for program evaluation. Sacramento, CA: rpapalewis@csus.edu

Papalewis, R. & Fortune, R. (2002). *Leadership on Purpose: Promising Practices for African-American and Hispanic Students.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Rashotte, C.A., MacPhee, K., & Torgesen, J.K. (2001). The effectiveness of a group reading instruction program with poor readers in multiple grades. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 15, 135–149.

Snow, C., Burns, S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.) (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children.* Washington, DC: U.S. National Academy Press.

Stein, M. (1993). *The beginning reading instruction study*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Stein, M., Johnson, B., & Gutlohn, L. (September–October 1999). Analyzing beginning reading programs: The relationship between decoding instruction and text. *Remedial and Special Education*, 20, 5, 275-287.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002). Available Online: www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/

Torgesen, J.K. (Spring/Summer 1998). Catch them before they fall: Identification and assessment to preventing reading failure in young children. *American Educator*, 22, 32–39.

Torgesen, J.K., Alexander, A.W., Wagner, R.K., Rashotte, C.A., Voeller, K., Conway, T., & Rose, E. (2001). Intensive remedial instruction for children with severe reading disabilities: Immediate and long-term outcomes from two instructional approaches. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 34, 33–58.

Torgesen, J.K. & Burgess, S.R. (1998). Consistency of reading-related phonological processes throughout early childhood: Evidence from longitudinal-correlational and instructional studies. In J. Metsala & L. Ehri (Eds.). *Word Recognition in Beginning Reading,* 161–188. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.

Torgesen, J.K., Rashotte, C., Alexander, A., & MacPhee, K. (2002). *Progress toward understanding the conditions that are required to remediate reading difficulties in older children*. Invited address to conference titled, "Effective preventions and interventions for children at-risk of reading difficulties or with identified reading disabilities." Sponsored by the National Dyslexia Research Foundation, Kohala Coast, Hawaii, June.

Wagner, R.K., Torgesen, J.K., Rashotte, C.A., Hecht, S.A., Barker, T.A., Burgess, S.R., Donahue, J., & Garon, T. (1997). Changing causal relations between phonological processing abilities and word-level reading as children develop from beginning to fluent readers: A five-year longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology*, 33, 468–479.

About the Author

Dr. Rosemary Papalewis is currently a Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at California State University, Sacramento. She also serves as the Director of the University's Center for Teaching and Learning. Prior to coming to CSUS, she has held positions as the Western Region Vice President and National Teacher Expert for Sylvan Learning Systems, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Inter-Institutional Relations for the California State University System, and Professor and Cofounding Director for the Joint Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at CSU Fresno, and was a chief administrator and principal of several private schools in Nebraska. She began her career in education as a middle school teacher in the Los Angeles area. In addition to numerous research publications and presentations, she is the lead author of a recently published book titled *Leadership on Purpose: Promising Practices for African-American and Hispanic Students* (Corwin Press).

SCHOLASTIC

Professional Paper

Scholastic Inc.
557 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
1-800-SCHOLASTIC

Item 125439
20M 12/05