

## RESEARCH UPDATE

Colton Joint Unified School District  
Colton, California

Students Using *READ 180*<sup>®</sup> in  
*English 1 Intensive Course*  
Achieve Significant Gains on the CST ELA

**PROFILE**

**District:** Colton Joint Unified School District

**Evaluation Period:** 2008–2009

**Grades:** 9th

**Model:** Daily 110-minute *READ 180* instructional model within *English 1 Intensive* course

**Assessment:** California Standards Test of English Language Arts (CST ELA)

**DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS**

Centrally located between the mountains and beaches of California, the Colton Joint Unified School District (CJUSD) enrolls more than 24,000 students in 18 elementary schools, four middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, one continuation high school, one alternative school, one adult program, and one preschool center. Most of the students are Hispanic (78%), and many are from low-income families (67%).

**IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW**

CJUSD was designated as a “program improvement district” for failing to show adequate reading gains within the English Language Learner and Special Education student populations for four consecutive years. Concerned with meeting state benchmarks, the district sought to adopt a rigorous literacy intervention program that would not only accelerate the academic performance of struggling readers, but would also meet University of California-approved coursework.

**Implementation Model**

During the 2007–2008 school year, CJUSD worked with Scholastic representatives to create an *English 1 Intensive* course, customizing the *READ 180* program for their schools and incorporating district core novel requirements, while maintaining the research-based program foundations. The 110-minute college-preparatory *English 1 Intensive* class combined the best of *READ 180* Enterprise Edition—the *rBook*<sup>®</sup> Teaching System which provides a road map for daily Whole- and Small-Group Instruction, individualized adaptive technology, engaging expository text, detailed assessment, and reporting tools—with core

novels and short readings from the California ninth-grade English Language Arts Recommended Reading List.

To meet the intensity required in a University of California-approved course, the district modified the *rBook* Teaching System so that all reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing instruction directly related to core literature. Toward that end, CJUSD adapted the *rBook* instructional path so that all daily lessons focused on teaching students to read, revisit, and react to text, practice vocabulary, and complete extensive writing assignments with built-in scaffolding. The goal was to help build and transition students' skills into the higher levels of learning for college preparatory work.

### Participants

Beginning with the 2008–2009 school year, CJUSD placed struggling ninth-grade students who scored 275 or less on the California Standards Test of English Language Arts (CST ELA) and demonstrated a *Scholastic Reading Inventory* (SRI) Lexile of 750 or less into the new *English 1 Intensive* classroom.

A total of 212 ninth-grade students participating in the *English 1 Intensive* course comprised the sample in the following analyses. All *English 1 Intensive* students had valid data from the Spring 2008 and Spring 2009 CST ELA administrations.

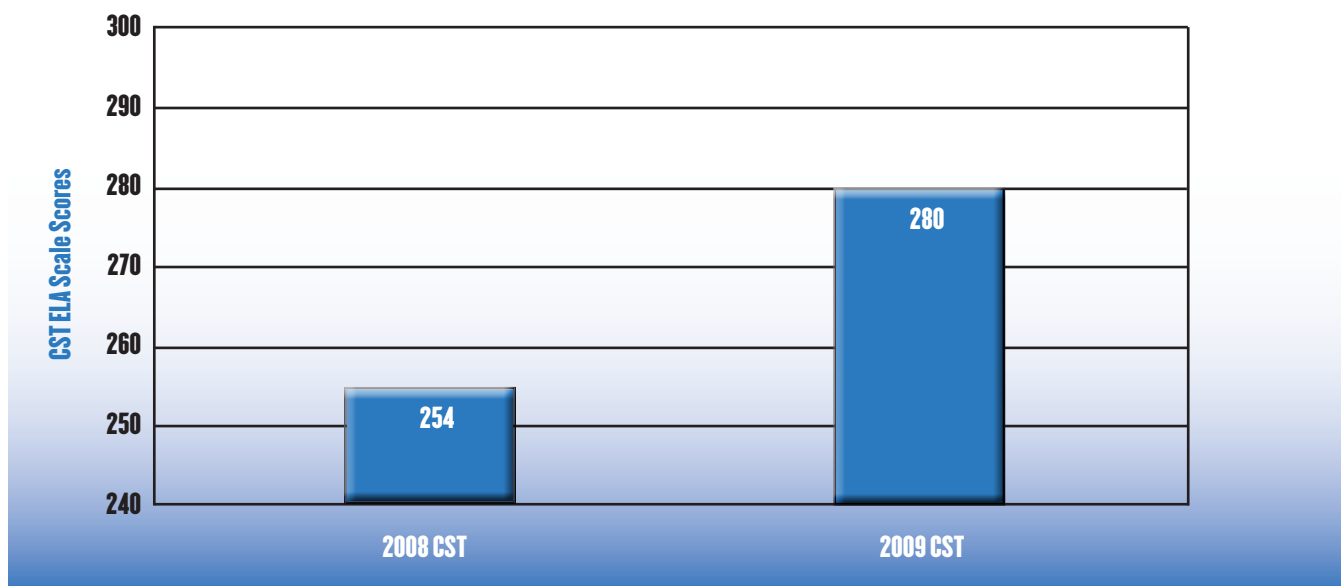
While the explicit, systematic, and research-based instruction in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension was designed to improve students' literacy skills, integrated lessons with grade-level-appropriate literature and nonfiction were developed to help transition students' skills into the levels of learning necessary for a college preparatory course.

### Measures

The California Standards Test of English Language Arts (CST ELA) was used to measure the reading achievement gains of students in the *English 1 Intensive* course. A student's performance on the CST ELA Reading Test is reported as both a scale score (which can range from 150–600) and a performance level. Students' scale scores can be compared within the same grade level, but these scores are not comparable across grade level.

Figure 1.

*English 1 Intensive* Ninth-Grade Students (N=212): 2008 and 2009 CST ELA Scale Scores



The performance levels were designed to bring meaning to these scale scores. Each of the five performance levels (Far Below Basic, Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, or Advanced) is associated with a range of scale scores for each grade level. CST ELA scores and performance levels from Spring 2008 and Spring 2009 were collected for all participating students.

## RESULTS

Data indicate that, on average, ninth graders enrolled in the *English 1 Intensive* class made significant improvements in their reading ability, as measured by the CST ELA Reading Test. From Spring 2008 to Spring 2009 school year, average CST ELA scale scores changed from 254 to 280, a significant difference of 26 scale-score points ( $t = 12.40, p = .00$ ). See Figure 1.

In addition, dependent t-tests showed that there was a significant reduction in the percentage of *English 1 Intensive* students performing at the Far Below Basic and Below Basic levels on the CST ELA from 2008 to 2009 ( $t = 7.40, p = .00$ ). Whereas almost all of the 212

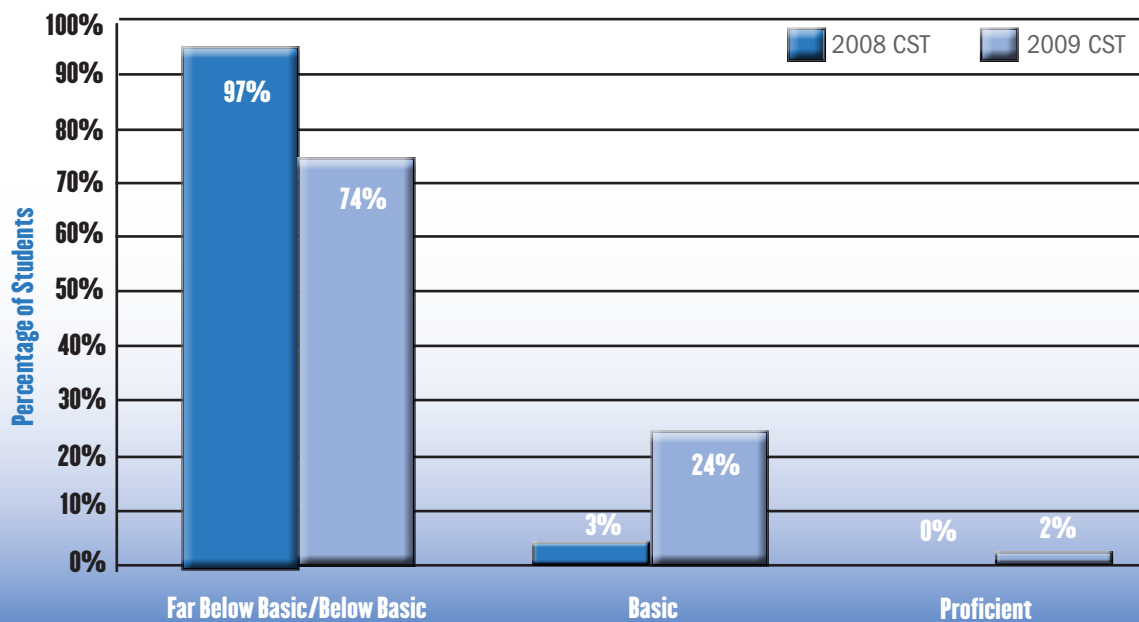
targeted students fell into the Far Below Basic or Below Basic range in 2008, only three-quarters did so in 2009. Meanwhile, this group of students showed significant increases in the percentage of students performing at the Basic level ( $t = 6.97, p = .00$ ) and the Proficient level ( $t = 2.01, p < .05$ ). Whereas only 3% of these targeted students had Basic or better skills in 2008, more than one-quarter of students performed at the Basic or better level in 2009. See Figure 2.

## CONCLUSION

Preliminary results from the 2008–2009 school year indicate a significant improvement in the CST ELA scores of CJUSD ninth-grade students who participated in the new *English 1 Intensive* course, built on the *READ 180* program. After one year of intervention, the percentages of *English 1 Intensive* students performing at the Basic and Proficient levels on the CST ELA increased significantly, and the percentage performing at the Below Basic and Far Below Basic levels decreased by nearly a quarter.

Figure 2.

*English 1 Intensive* Ninth-Grade Students (N=212): Percent of Students Scoring at Various Performance Levels on the 2008 and 2009 CST ELA



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