

CASE STUDY

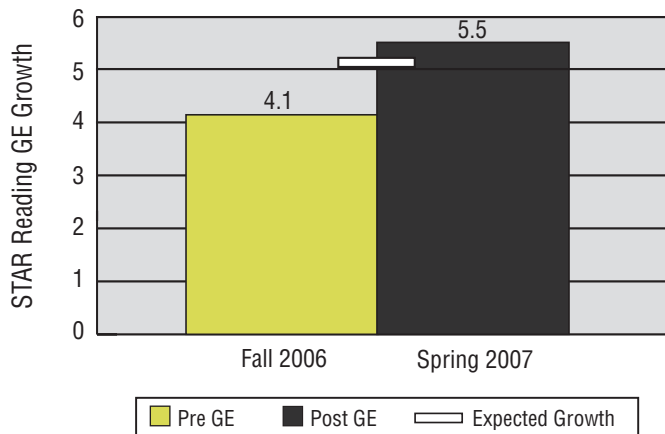
Read Now Power Up! Boosts Scores and Confidence at Illinois Middle School

Jaime Huppert, special education teacher and Trena Nave, reading specialist; Carbondale Middle School

Introduction

“One of the benefits of the program we had not anticipated was the confidence and improved self-esteem we saw in each of the students who participated.” Special education teacher Jaime Huppert has seen stunning changes in her students at Carbondale Middle School since implementing *Read Now Power Up!* in September 2006. During the 2006–07 school year, her students’ grade equivalent (GE)¹ scores increased by 1.4 GEs, exceeding the level of growth typically achieved in this timeframe (see Table below).

Special Education Students Realize Significant Grade Equivalent (GE) Growth Using *Read Now Power Up!*



Study Description

In February 2006, Jaime Huppert, a special education teacher, and Trena Nave, a reading specialist, traveled to Nashville, Tennessee for the Renaissance Learning National Conference. While there, they attended a session on *Read Now Power Up!*, a comprehensive, research-based reading intervention for struggling readers in grades 5–9, by Renaissance Learning and Steck Vaughn. After learning about this tool, the teachers saw potential for it to be a valuable asset to the language arts curriculum at their school, Carbondale Middle School in Carbondale, Illinois.



Educator Background

Jaime Huppert (pictured right) has been working with seventh- and eighth-grade special education students at Carbondale Middle School since January 2000. She earned her bachelor’s degree in special education from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, where she is also currently pursuing a master’s degree in reading and language.

Trena Nave (pictured left) has been an educator for 16 years, 13 of them spent as a reading specialist in Carbondale District #95. She earned her bachelor’s degree and a reading endorsement qualifying her as a Title I reading specialist from Southern Illinois University, in Carbondale, Illinois.

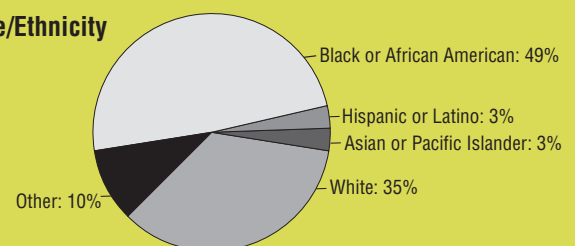
School Profile

Carbondale Middle School
 Students: 416, Grades: 6–8
 RNPU used in 1 special education classroom
 Carbondale, Illinois

Demographics

Small City
 Schoolwide Title I
 Gifted and Talented: 15.8%
 Free or reduced lunch: 59%
 Mobility: 28%

Race/Ethnicity



In September 2006, after funding was made available through a Title I grant, *Read Now Power Up!* was implemented with seven Carbondale students in a self-contained special education classroom. Both Trena and Jaime received ongoing on-site and online training from Renaissance Learning throughout the 2006–07 school year.

Jaime implemented *Read Now Power Up!* using a 60-minute, 2-day model and divided her students into two groups. The first 15 minutes of each *Read Now Power Up!* class period began with a whole-class introduction and read aloud.² On the first *Read Now Power Up!* day of each week, Jaime delivered 30 minutes of teacher-led instruction to Group A while Group B spent this time independently reading or working on web and workbook activities. Then, all students spent 10 minutes independently reading as Jaime met with individual students to work on Re-Teach Lessons.³ Each class period ended with a 5-minute, whole-group wrap up. On the second day of class, the same schedule was followed, but with instruction and independent activities switched for the groups during the 30-minute time period.

Reading specialist Trena is especially pleased that *Read Now Power Up!* supports and enhances the school's efforts to align their reading and language arts curriculum with Illinois state standards. "The close alignment of our school with these standards ensures our students will receive the instruction they need."

Results

"We were very excited and pleased with the test scores we saw using *Read Now Power Up!*." Jaime's students made leaps and bounds of improvement using *Read Now*

Power Up! not only in test scores, but also in marked improvements in confidence, self-esteem, and behavior. After implementing *Read Now Power Up!* for 1 year, the students in this special education classroom increased their STAR Reading⁴ GE scores from 4.1 in the fall to 5.5 in the spring, for a gain of 1.4 GEs. Typical growth expected from general education students after 1 year is a gain of 1 GE.

"One of the benefits of the program we had not anticipated was the confidence and improved self-esteem we saw in each of the students who participated in this program."

Students with a history of behavioral and/or learning issues began to succeed in reading, for perhaps the first time, and the confidence they gained from this was tangible. One student stopped having outbursts during class and was better able to interact with other students in the class. Another student that normally only spoke in class if asked a direct question began to participate frequently and to volunteer responses during small-group discussions.

Trena notes that the changes in one student were particularly striking, "Once he caught on to the computer portion of *Read Now Power Up!* he could really shine.... I think it was the first time in all of his school years that he was able to complete tasks independently and do well on them. His confidence really helped to boost him even in his independent reading."

Conclusion

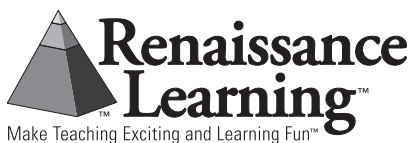
As is evident from the changes seen at Carbondale Middle School, the impact of *Read Now Power Up!* is further reaching than improved test scores. The special education students that used this tool were able to be and feel successful as readers, a change that impacted not only their test results, but also their outlook and overall demeanor.

¹ A grade equivalent (GE) indicates the normal grade placement of students for whom a particular score is typical.

² In the *Read Now Power Up!* classroom, teachers spend time each day reading aloud to students to model important reading behaviors, such as what they are thinking while reading, how to use comprehension strategies, fluent reading, and so forth.

³ *Read Now Power Up!*'s Re-Teach Map report displays the names of students who missed specific reading-strategy quiz questions, and directs teachers to instruction to revisit and special lessons to use to reteach the topic(s) to them.

⁴ STAR Reading is Renaissance Learning's standardized, computer-adaptive assessment of general reading achievement.



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