# EssentialSkills

## Providing the building blocks
## upon which all future learning is based…

# Essential Skills

We have been helping to ensure students have a solid foundation in the basics for over 15 years. There are more than 100,000 Essential Skills programs being used in **over 20,000 schools** throughout North America. In an industry where so many companies and products come and go, how has Essential Skills managed to build a strong grassroots following with educators over the past decade? It's simple: **our products produce results!**

A number of teachers have conducted classroom-based efficacy studies regarding the use of Essential Skills software. Often this research uses a pre-test to establish a baseline of student skills, followed by a period of several weeks or months during which time the students use Essential Skills programs to build skills in a specific area. Finally, a post-test is applied in which students are retested to measure their improvement while using the software.

The following examples provide a sampling of some of the measurable results that educators have achieved with their students. To view additional research, visit **www.essentialskills.net** and click on the "Research" link in the main menu.

## Our Motto
*Success is the greatest motivator*

## Our Mission
*To make a difference in education by providing affordable, technology based solutions that motivate students, build their confidence, and allow them to achieve success*

# Research & Measurable Results:
## PHONEMIC AWARENESS

This chart reflects DIBELS testing results for initial consonant sound recognition prior to working with the Essential Skills Super Phonics program and then again six months later. The students used the program once a week for 30 minutes during the September to March time frame.

The results indicate **tremendous growth during the six month trial period** with an average DIBLES score increase of 37.36 percent.

Super Phonics was the only program that was used and the **students received no other instruction for initial sound recognition**.

Phoneme identification, or letter sound recognition, is widely considered to be the cornerstone of teaching children to read. The U.S. National Reading Panel report: *Teaching Children to Read*, identifies phonemic awareness (understanding that spoken words are composed of tiny sound segments or phonemes) as the first of five key components of an effective reading program. The report also states that the "...use of computers yielded significant effects for teaching phonemic awareness and its transfer to reading."

| STUDENT | SOUND FLUENCY SEPTEMBER | SOUND FLUENCY MARCH |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| MG | 38% | 100% |
| JH | 44% | 98% |
| BL | 38% | 96% |
| MS | 46% | 87% |
| GW | 62% | 85% |
| TA | 46% | 83% |
| BS | 18% | 78% |
| RB | 62% | 77% |
| DF | 44% | 76% |
| AM | 62% | 75% |
| AO | 44% | 60% |
| **AVG** | **45.81%** | **83.17%** |

Morgan Township Elementary Morgan, IN

*"The use of computers yielded significant effects for teaching phonemic awareness and its transfer to reading."*



*"Since we have started using the Essential Skills programs there has been a marked improvement in our statewide reading scores."*

Diane Patterson, Reading Coach, Boaz Elementary, Boaz, AL

*"These programs teach the skills that young children need in a sequential, systematic manner. These are high quality, research and evidence based programs."*

Sandra Crandall, Reading Specialist, Moiola Elementary, CA

# Research & Measurable Results:
# WORD RECOGNITION

The accompanying chart includes pre-test and post-test data collected during a two month study conducted regarding the effectiveness of the **Essential Skills Sight Words** program. Twenty-eight students from two first grade classes were administered a word recognition test for 300 words included in the Sight Words program. The students then used Sight Words three times a week for 30 minutes for a period of two months. At the conclusion of the two month trial, students were administered a post-test for the same 300 words.

The results of the study indicated an **average increase of 20 percent in word recognition**, with nearly half of the students exhibiting an increase of 25 percent or greater. Eight out of the twenty-eight students showed improvements of greater than 30 percentile points. One student (*) in particular demonstrated increased word recognition of 37.41 percent. Given that Essential Skills Sight Words was the only program administered during this period, these results are a clear indication of the program's effectiveness for improving word recognition skills.

**Word recognition is fundamental in developing reading fluency**—one of the five essential components of reading instruction as identified by the National Reading Panel.

| Name | Pre-test | Post-test | Change | % Change |
|------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| Sami | 174 | 245 | 1 | 28.98 |
| Dylan | 270 | 296 | 26 | 8.78 |
| Mason | 263 | 294 | 31 | 10.54 |
| Ben | 252 | 284 | 32 | 11.27 |
| Renee | 229 | 292 | 63 | 21.58 |
| Maggie | 215 | 293 | 78 | 26.62 |
| Patrick | 203 | 293 | 90 | 30.72 |
| Stephanie | 200 | 283 | 83 | 29.33 |
| Cloey | 193 | 278 | 85 | 30.58 |
| Erika | 176 | 272 | 96 | 35.29 |
| Thomas | 175 | 274 | 99 | 36.13 |
| *Colton | 174 | 278 | 104 | 37.41 |
| Victoria | 148 | 220 | 72 | 32.73 |
| Greysen | 138 | 206 | 68 | 33.01 |
| Marissa | 295 | 298 | 3 | 1.69 |
| Jared | 291 | 296 | 5 | 1.69 |
| Brock | 260 | 298 | 3 | 1.01 |
| Hunter | 247 | 262 | 15 | 5.73 |
| Derek | 231 | 280 | 49 | 17.50 |
| Caleigh | 212 | 268 | 56 | 20.90 |
| Alex | 209 | 265 | 56 | 21.13 |
| Jackson | 207 | 267 | 60 | 22.47 |
| Lacy | 201 | 277 | 76 | 27.44 |
| Zachery | 172 | 263 | 91 | 34.60 |

Lourdes Primary School, Nebraska City, NE

*"Given that Essential Skills Sight Words was the only program administered during this period, these results are a clear indication of the program's effectiveness for improving word recognition skills."*

*"We have seen a marked improvement in our students' reading and comprehension performance. Our test score results have improved dramatically! These significant improvements can be attributed to Essential Skills because our students use these programs every day."*

Dr. Linda Hunt, Principal, Charles Churn Christian Academy, Brooklyn, NY

# Research & Measurable Results:
## NUMERACY

The following data was collected during a nine month trial involving 17 first grade students and the use of the Essential Skills Mastering Numeration program.

Students used the **Mastering Numeration** program for 25 minutes, twice a week. Results were gathered from three pre-tests administered in August that were then compared against three post-tests given in May. The cumulative test covers the entire first grade math curriculum. The addition and subtraction tests are assessments of these basic math facts.

The subject class average on the cumulative test went from **62% to 91%**, with averages for addition and subtraction facts increasing respectively from **12% to 50%** and **6% to 31%**. These results indicate **significant gains in all areas assessed** with an overall increase of 30.6% across the board. The most substantial gains were made in basic addition facts where students gained an impressive 38%. These percentage gains are well above what could be expected from regular classroom instruction alone.

In addition to the considerable academic gains demonstrated by the subject class, it was also noted that the students were always very eager to work with the Mastering Numeration program.

| Student | Pre Cumulative | Post Cumulative | Pre Addition | Post Addition | Pre Subtraction | Post Subtraction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 30 | 42 | 3 | 32 | 0 | 26 |
| 2 | 33 | 47 | 20 | 59 | 6 | 43 |
| 3 | 27 | 42 | 3 | 28 | 0 | 13 |
| 4 | 25 | 45 | 14 | 40 | 1 | 23 |
| 5 | 35 | 46 | 4 | 49 | 4 | 28 |
| 6 | 20 | 47 | 2 | 22 | 1 | 11 |
| 7 | 43 | 45 | 37 | 87 | 23 | 46 |
| 8 | 31 | 43 | 14 | 63 | 6 | 57 |
| 9 | 38 | 48 | 25 | 51 | 9 | 21 |
| 10 | 28 | 41 | 0 | 35 | 0 | 10 |
| 11 | 21 | 48 | 0 | 47 | 1 | 33 |
| 12 | 33 | 47 | 25 | 65 | 9 | 53 |
| 13 | 34 | 47 | 8 | 49 | 3 | 27 |
| 14 | 44 | 49 | 35 | 90 | 26 | 44 |
| 15 | 24 | 46 | 1 | 53 | 3 | 38 |
| 16 | 25 | 44 | 7 | 28 | 1 | 23 |
| 17 | 35 | 45 | 13 | 58 | 11 | 30 |
| % Average | 62% | 91% | 12% | 50% | 6% | 31% |
| Total Gain | 29% | | 38% | | 25% | |

Note: This pilot was inclusive of Special Education students
Claflin Elementary School, Claflin, KS

*"We used the Essential Skills math programs in our Grade 4 after school tutoring program. Our tutoring program required pre and post-testing. We saw improved scores and in some cases dramatically improved scores at the conclusion of this program."*

Beth Perry, Instructional Technology Resource Teacher,
Richmond County Schools

*"In addition to the considerable academic gains demonstrated by the subject class, it was also noted that the students were always very eager to work with the Mastering Numeration program."*

# Research & Measurable Results:
## READING COMPREHENSION

In this study a target group of second grade students was administered the Ekwall-Shanker Reading Inventory, a research-based and clinically verified reading inventory used to assess a wide range of students' reading abilities.

The assessment was given as a pre-test in early September and again as a post-test following a ten week period utilizing Essential Skills Reading Comprehension software. Students worked on Essential Skills for thirty minutes a day during the ten week period.

**Students progressed an average of 2.16 levels in oral reading and 2.5 levels in silent reading in only ten weeks.** The levels of the Ekwall-Shanker Inventory are very close in equivalence to grade levels, making the results of this study particularly exciting.

Jo Ann Walters Elementary, Dierks, AR

| STUDENT | INSTRUCTIONAL LEVEL (SEPT) | INSTRUCTIONAL LEVEL (DEC) | GROWTH |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GIRL 1** ORAL SILENT | PRIMER PRE-PRIMER | LEVEL 2 LEVEL 3 | 2 LEVELS 4 LEVELS |
| **GIRL 2** ORAL SILENT | LEVEL 1 LEVEL 1 | LEVEL 2 LEVEL 3 | 1 LEVEL 2 LEVELS |
| **GIRL 3** ORAL SILENT | LEVEL 1 PRE-PRIMER | LEVEL 3 LEVEL 2 | 2 LEVELS 3 LEVELS |
| **BOY 1** ORAL SILENT | PRE-PRIMER PRE-PRIMER | LEVEL 2 LEVEL 2 | 3 LEVELS 3 LEVELS |
| **BOY 2** ORAL SILENT | PRE-PRIMER PRE-PRIMER | LEVEL 2 LEVEL 1 | 3 LEVELS 2 LEVELS |
| **BOY 3** ORAL SILENT | PRE-PRIMER LEVEL 1 | LEVEL 1 LEVEL 2 | 2 LEVELS 1 LEVEL |

*"We have had eight years of sustained growth in our AYP/API results and the Reading Comprehension programs from Essential Skills have definitely played a role in that growth."*

Randy Helvey, Teacher, Park Avenue Elementary

*"Reading Comprehension and Sight Words are used in our school. The more the students use the programs, the more their reading scores go up!"*

Alma Click, teacher, West Irvine Elementary

**Essential**Skills

*Proven to Raise Test Scores & Narrow the Achievement Gap*

# Research & Measurable Results:
## SPECIAL EDUCATION

The below chart illustrates the performance gains demonstrated by 12 exceptional education students in grades K to 4. The data was gathered during the course of an eight month trial during which time students used the Essential Skills Phonemic Awareness program three times a week for approximately 15 minutes per session.

Each student was administered the STAR Early Literacy Test in August and again the following April. The subject group demonstrated an average of 27 points gained in the area of phonemic awareness.
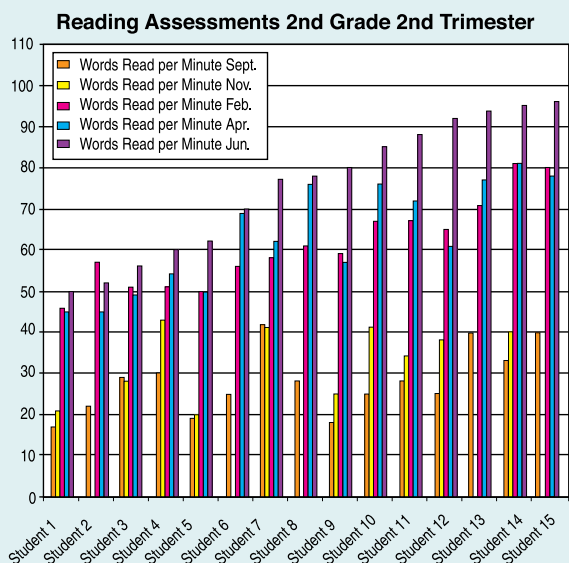
Buffalo Elementary, Buffalo, KY

| Student / Grade level | Pre-test score | Post-test score |
|---|---|---|
| S.E. / KINDERGARTEN | 15 | 61 |
| M.V. / 1ST | 41 | 53 |
| S.D. / 1ST | 48 | 92 |
| J.C. / 1ST | 41 | 66 |
| A.B. / 1ST | 25 | 56 |
| M.F. / 2ND | 45 | 76 |
| S.B. / 2ND | 69 | 87 |
| L.F. / 3RD | 21 | 51 |
| A.E. / 4TH | 84 | 94 |
| D.G. / 4TH | 68 | 82 |
| D.M. / 4TH | 91 | 99 |

The graph below represents fifteen second grade students who used Essential Skills over a nine month period. These students were among the lowest in the school in terms of reading ability. They spent forty-five minutes, twice a week using Essential Skills software.

These students were tested five times during the September to June time-frame using the University of Oregon, Oral Reading Fluency Test. Many of the students doubled their reading rate in just five months.

Whitney School, Anacortes, WA

**Reading Assessments 2nd Grade 2nd Trimester**

Legend:
- Words Read per Minute Sept.
- Words Read per Minute Nov.
- Words Read per Minute Feb.
- Words Read per Minute Apr.
- Words Read per Minute Jun.

(Bar chart showing reading assessment data for Student 1 through Student 15)

*"Essential Skills software has been instrumental in the educational progress of the Special Needs students at Webster School. The progress these students have made as a result of using these programs is nothing short of miraculous! Essential Skills programs have provided the means for these students to progress at their own rate and to develop to the best of their abilities. No one ever dreamed that these students would progress as far as they have, but with the Essential Skills programs it has happened – they are readers!"*

Wendy Woods, Reading Lab, Webster Elementary

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*"I have been teaching reading for 15 years and have used many different types of supplemental materials. I must say I have been extremely surprised by the amount of progress my students have made in a short amount of time. Two of my students went from reading at a 0.4 reading level to a 2.0 reading level in just five months! I attribute this success to the implementation of the daily use of Essential Skills, as my routine reading instruction has not changed."*

Teresa Anderson, Special Education National Board Certified, Moss Hill School