



ReadingHorizons

The Foundation for Reading English

Results

An Evaluation of the *Reading Horizons Discover Intensive Phonics* Program at Iron Springs Elementary

Reading Horizons

60 North Cutler Drive, Suite 101
North Salt Lake, UT 84054

P 800.333.0054

F 801.295.7088

www.ReadingHorizons.com

info@readinghorizons.com

Scope of Work:

The Institute for Behavioral Research in Creativity (IBRIC), in partnership with the Utah State Office of Education and the Iron County School District, conducted a three-year evaluation of a systematic phonics program, *Discover Intensive Phonics for Yourself*. This direct instruction and interactive software curriculum supplements reading programs in grades K-3 and has been reported to be effective with K-6 students who struggle with reading.

Assessment Tools:

The State of Utah Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) scores for grades 1–3 in 2007 and for grades 2–3 in 2008 and 2009

- Norm-referenced Iowa Tests of Basic Skills percentile rank for grade 3 students

Time Frame:

Conducted between 2007 and 2009

Observations:

Overall, teachers reported a very positive attitude about their professional development experience for all three years of the study.

Overall, teachers reported a very positive attitude about key areas of the program elements.

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Cedar City, Utah

Kindergarten through third-grade teachers at Iron Springs Elementary School in Cedar City, Utah were trained in the program and began implementing the curriculum in their classrooms during the 2006-2007 school year. Student achievement outcome data was gathered via multiple assessments and was compared with a control school similar in Socioeconomic Status (SES) and its suburban extent on the same state assessment tool.

Results of State of Utah criterion-referenced testing data:

- Consistent with the published research, systematic phonics instruction has a greater effect on students who receive the instruction in earlier grades and improves over time (Table 1).
- A measure of long-term effects of the program shows a higher percentile rank of grade 5 students in 2009 who had been enrolled in the program in their grade 3 school year compared to the percentile rank of students at the control school (Table 2).

A measure of long-term effects of the program:

- The state scores hover at the high 78 percent level (Table 3).
- The control school percentile ranking is random and, in this case, lower at higher elementary grades.
- Consistent with published research, on systematic phonics instruction the Iron Springs percentile ranking scores of grade 3 students who had the curriculum early and ongoing for 3 years reveal the best outcomes.
- Although Iron Springs Elementary and the control school are matched on SES, the control school's percentile ranking is most often below district ranking, whereas Iron Springs percentile is most often above its district's ranking.

Impact and Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, the *Discover Intensive Phonics for Yourself* program positively impacted student outcomes, especially when implemented in the early grades. The positive reading attitudes of students and positive teacher attitudes regarding the professional development training and program elements add to this program's sustainability as a piece of the reading pedagogy in classrooms. The improved outcomes of K-3 students in this study motivates further research of the use of this program in more K-3 classrooms as well as with students in upper elementary grades who have difficulty reading. If the outcomes of students enrolled in the program in this study generalize to other students given access to the program, this supplemental curriculum could play a part in states closing the gap in student reading outcomes and schools achieving Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) goals.

Table 1: Percent Proficient on the Language Arts State CRT

	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3		
	2007	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009		
Iron Springs	81%	68%	79%	86%	77%	77%	93%		
Control School	55%	75%	66%	91%	71%	72%	69%		
State	74%	78%	77%	79%	78%	77%	80%		
Iron District	83%	80%	83%	85%	83%	84%	88%		

- 1 year of the curriculum
- 2 years of the curriculum, 1st & 2nd grade or 2nd & 3rd grade
- 3 years of the curriculum, K, 1st, 2nd grade or 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade

Table 2: Grade 5 National Percentile Rank for Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Fall 2009

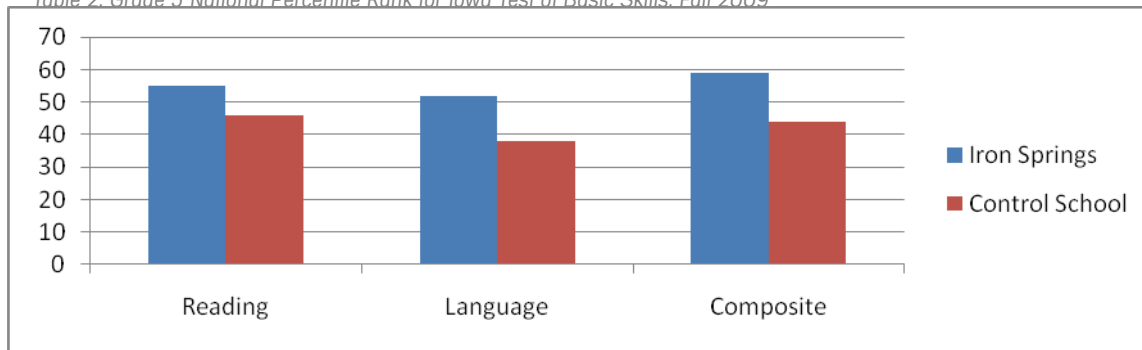


Table 3: Grades 2-5 Percent Proficient Language Arts CRT in 2009

