



ReadingHorizons
The Foundation for Reading English

Results

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

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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.

The following scores are included in the report:

- 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
- UPASS Total School Performance Results
- IBRIC developed Elementary Reading Attitudes Survey of students in grades 1-3
- IBRIC developed Profile of Scientifically-Based Reading Instruction of grade K-3 teachers
 - * overall approach to reading in their classrooms
 - * attitudes about the professional development received
 - * evaluation of the program elements

Time Frame:

Conducted between 2007 and 2009

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

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 the teacher surveys and interviews:

- 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.

Results of the student surveys:

- Overall, the attitudes of students participating in the program were significantly more positive than the attitudes of the national norm (See Table 1).
- Attitudes about reading remained consistent across cohorts. Groups of students with significantly more positive reading attitudes than the national norm retained that attitude as they moved through their elementary grades.
- The Grade 1 cohort had slightly less positive attitudes about reading and by year 3 of the program, their attitudes improved to nearer the norm.

Table 1: Reading attitudes of students at Iron Springs Elementary School compared with National Norm

	2007	2008	2009
Grade 1	Slightly less positive	Significantly more positive	Near norm
Grade 2	Significantly more positive	Slightly less positive	Significantly more positive
Grade 3	Significantly more positive	Significantly more positive	Near norm

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 2).
- % Proficient CRT Scores for Grade 2 (Table 3) and Grade 3 (Table 4)
 - The linear graph of the State of Utah scores for the three years of this study is flat. There was slight improvement or decline, but it hovered in the 75 percent proficiency level.
 - The control school scores are sporadic. Although in 2009 the Grade 2 scores were higher in the control school than Iron Springs Elementary, the year before they were significantly lower. It is difficult to speculate whether 2010 test scores will remain at the 90 percent proficiency level or drop back to the mid 60 percent when no pattern is established.
 - Iron Springs Elementary proficiency scores show a steady incline.

Table 2: Percent Proficient on the Language Arts State CRT

	Grade 1		Grade 2			Grade 3		
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
Iron County	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 3: Grade 2 Percent Proficient on Language Arts CRT 2007-2009

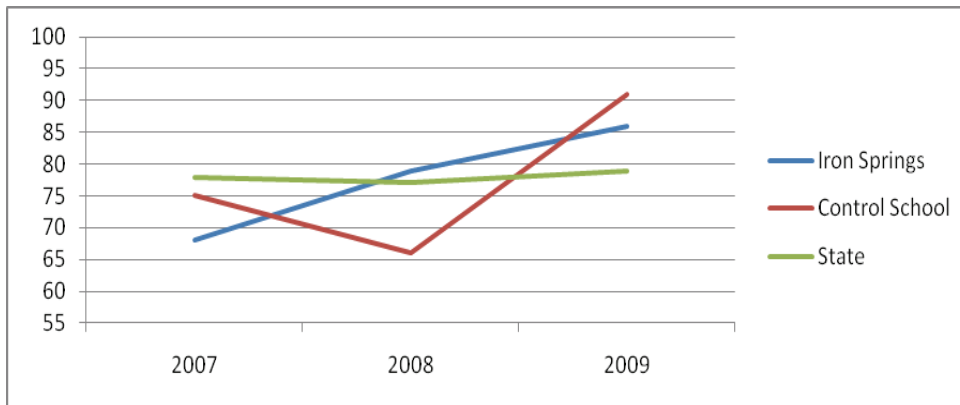
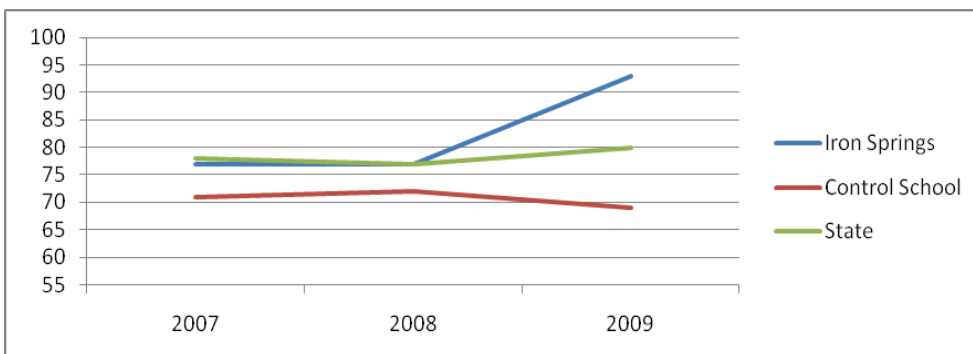


Table 4: Grade 3 Percent Proficient on Language Arts CRT 2007-2009



Results of State of Utah norm-referenced testing data:

- Improvement in Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) National Percentile Rank for students in the program compared to students at the control school (Table 5)
- 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 6).

Table 5: Grade 3 National Percentile Rank for Iowa Test of Basic Skills

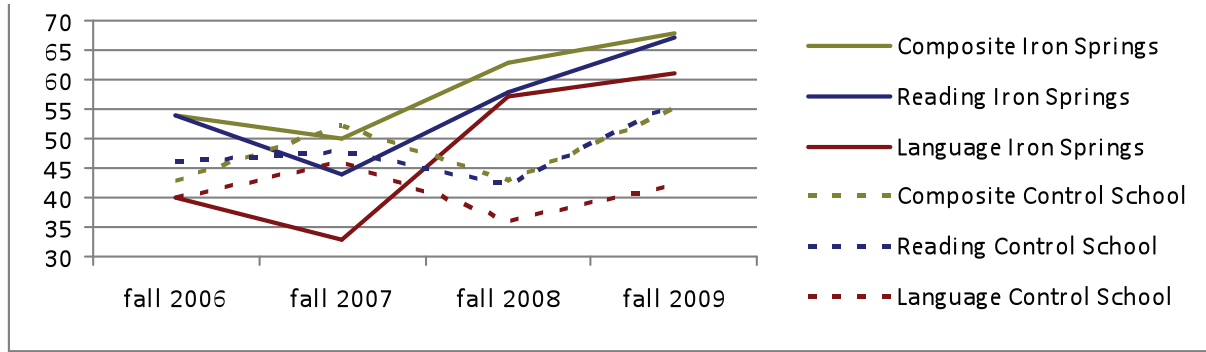
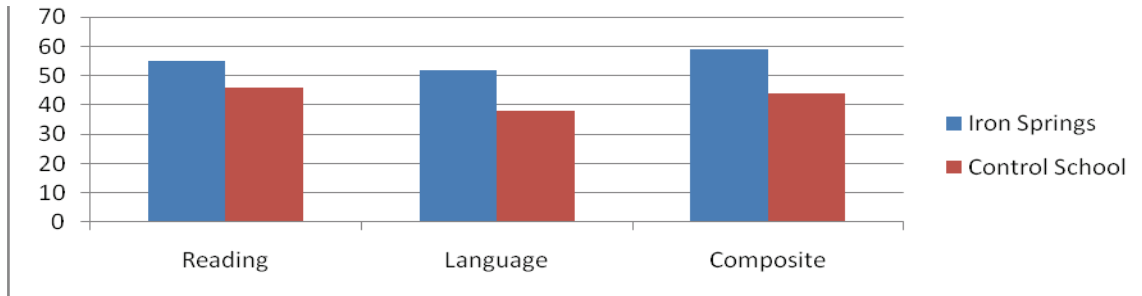


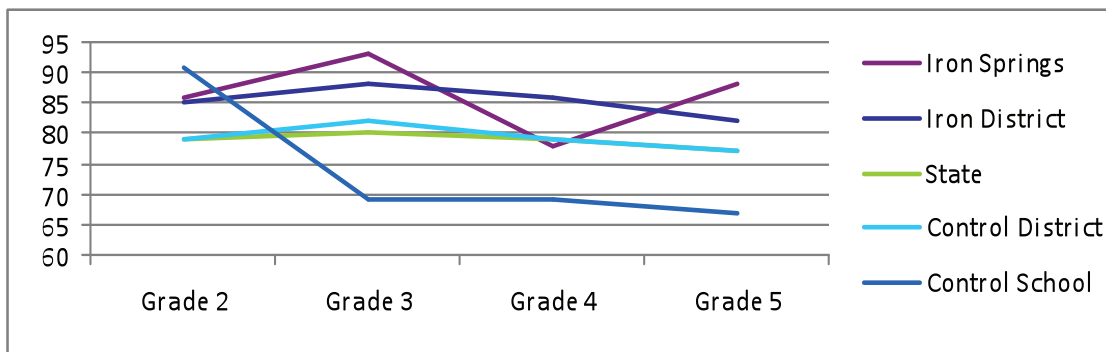
Table 6: Grade 5 National Percentile Rank for Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Fall 2009



A measure of long-term effects of the program:

- The state scores hover at the high 78% level.
- The control school percentile ranking is random and 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 their district's ranking.

Table 7: Grades 2-5 Percent Proficient Language Arts CRT in 2009



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 adds 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.