



**Kindergarten and First Grade
Comparative Evaluation With At-Risk
Student Populations**



VOYAGER SOPRIS
LEARNING®

<p>Key Details</p> <p>Total Participants: 144</p> <p>Grade Levels: K and 1</p> <p>Instructional Period: 2005–2006</p> <p>Instructional Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K – 60 min/day • 1 – 90 min/day <p>Measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIBELS® (<i>Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills</i>) • Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) • Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) 	<p>District Demographics:</p> <p>District 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 86% Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) • 97.9% Nonwhite • <1% Hispanic • <1% Native American/Alaskan Native • 97.3 % Black • <1% Asian/Pacific Islander <p>District 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85.7% Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) • 72% Nonwhite • <1% Hispanic • <1% Native American/Alaskan Native • 71% Black • <1% Asian/Pacific Islander 	<p>Evaluation Sample Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84% Black • 15% White • 1% Hispanic • 86% Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) <p>n = number of students</p>
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To evaluate the effectiveness of *Read Well*® relative to other reading programs, a mixed-methods comparative evaluation study was conducted with 144 students from three schools in two Mississippi school districts.¹

On average, 84 percent, 15 percent, and 1 percent of participant students had the ethnic designation of black, white, and Hispanic, respectively; and across the two participant districts, 86 percent of students qualified for Free/Reduced Lunch (see Table 1 for district demographics and Table 2 for subgroup, implementation, and program details). It is important to note that the participant students at greatest risk for reading difficulties in each school—those scoring in the lowest third on a measure of letter naming² (kindergarten and first grade) and falling within the at-risk category on the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (first grade only)—received *Read Well* instruction. The remaining participant students received instruction in either a basal reading program or literature-based program with phonics instruction.

Table 1: District Demographics

District	# of Schools	Enrollment	% Black	% White	% Hispanic	% Asian/Pacific Islander	% Native American/Alaskan Native	% FRL
District of Elementary School 1	59 schools including 10 elementary schools	> 32,000 students	97.3	2.1	< 1	< 1	< 1	86
District of Elementary Schools 2 and 3	9 schools including 6 elementary schools	~3,900 students	71	28	< 1	< 1	< 1	85.7

Table 2: Subgroup, Implementation, and Program Details

	<i>Read Well</i>	Basal	Literature-based Phonics
Students (grade K)	23	25	24
Students (grade 1)	28	19	25
Teachers	2	4	4
Experience Teaching Program	1 semester	1 year	2+ years
Training	3–4 days	0–6 days	0–6 days
Instruction Time Per Day	K–60 min.	K–60 min.	K–60 min.
	1–90 min.	1–90 min.	1–90 min.

¹ Complete Technical Summary and Technical Report available upon request. In order to maintain confidentiality, the schools and districts in this evaluation were not named.

² *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (Kaminski & Good, 1998), Letter Naming Fluency subtest.

For approximately eight months, *Read Well* was implemented for 90 minutes daily in first grade and 60 minutes daily in kindergarten,³ and the evaluation data captures changes over a three and one-half month period.

Education measures include the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), multiple subtests from *DIBELS*[®] (*Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*) and Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE).

Results

The outcomes suggest that *Read Well* has a greater impact than the comparison programs in developing many critical literacy skills. Specifically, results indicate that for kindergarten students, *Read Well* gains exceeded comparison program gains in the areas of letter naming, phonological awareness, phonemic decoding, listening comprehension, and total reading; and, for first grade students, *Read Well* gains exceeded comparison program gains in phonological awareness, phonemic decoding, oral reading fluency, and vocabulary and comprehension composite.

Kindergarten Highlights

For kindergarten, the percent of students in the *Read Well* group placing in the Low Risk category on the *DIBELS* Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) subtest increased by 6 percent from mid-year (when the study began) to end of year, while the percent of comparison students at low risk decreased by 17 percent (see Graph 1).

Read Well students testing into the Low Risk category in phonological awareness, as measured by the *DIBELS* Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) subtest, increased from 47 percent to 94 percent from mid-year to end of year, while the percent of comparison group students testing into the Low Risk category demonstrated no change (see Graph 2).

Read Well students testing into the Low Risk category in phonemic decoding, as measured by *DIBELS* Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), increased from 53 percent to 71 percent, while the percentage of comparison group students testing into the Low Risk category increased only marginally from 60 percent to 64 percent during the same time period (see Graph 3).

Lastly, *Read Well* students testing into the Proficiency category—or “Developed” on the TPRI—increased from 80 percent at mid-year to 95 percent by the end of the year, while the percent of comparison group students testing into TPRI’s Developed category remained flat at 89 percent during the same time period (see Graph 4).

First Grade Highlights

For first grade, the percent of *Read Well* students in the Established category on PSF increased from 84 percent to 100 percent, whereas no change was seen for the comparison group (see Graph 5). In NWF, *Read Well* students in the Established category rose by 14 percent from mid-year over the evaluation period; whereas comparison students in the same category decreased by approximately 2 percent (see Graph 6).

In Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), as measured by *DIBELS*, *Read Well* students in the Established category increased by 12 percent, while comparison students in the same category decreased by 10 percent.

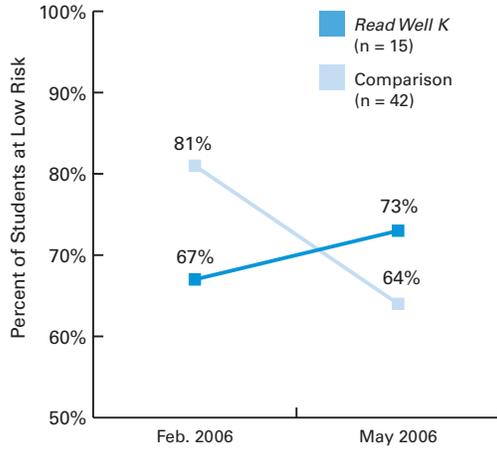
Overall Highlights

Kindergarten students using *Read Well* began the study performing more than one standard deviation below average in total reading as measured by the GRADE+. By the end of the study, their performance was less than one-fifth of a standard deviation below the mean of the larger normative sample for the test. First grade students using *Read Well* began the study performing more than one standard deviation below the population average in vocabulary and comprehension, as measured by the GRADE+. By the end of the study, they improved their relative standing by one-half of a standard deviation.

³ It is important to note that Hurricane Katrina impacted both districts, decreasing program implementation time by one week to one month, creating student movement within and between districts, and delaying pretest data collection from fall 2005 to February 2006.

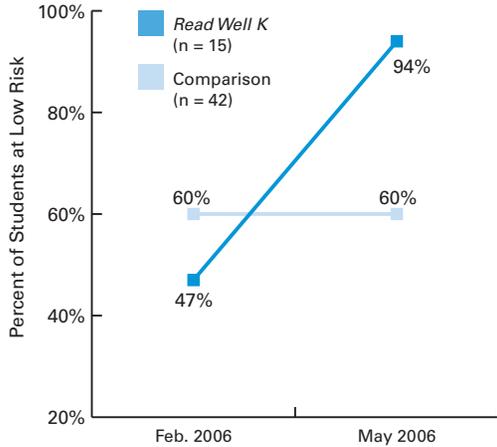
Graph 1

Kindergarten: Change in Percent of Students in *DIBELS* Low Risk Category on Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)*



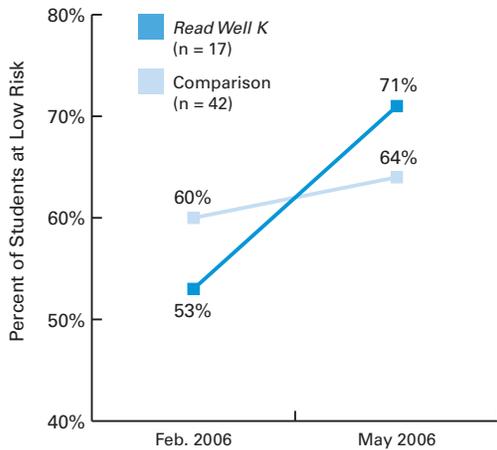
Graph 2

Kindergarten: Change in Percent of Students in *DIBELS* Low Risk Category on Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)*



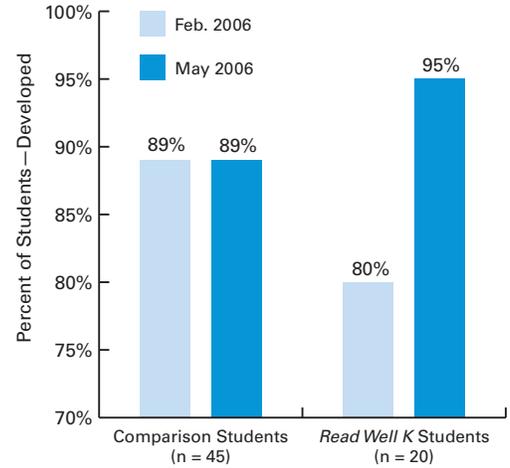
Graph 3

Kindergarten: Change in Percent of Students in *DIBELS* Low Risk Category on Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)*



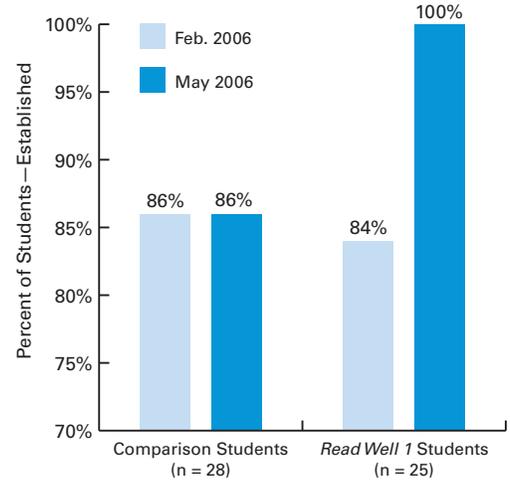
Graph 4

Kindergarten: Change in Percent of Students in TPRI Proficiency Category—Developed*



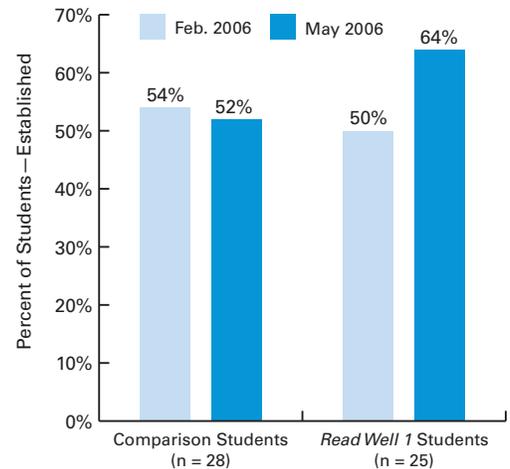
Graph 5

First Grade: Change in Percent of Students in *DIBELS* Established Category in Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)*



Graph 6

First Grade: Change in Percent of Students in *DIBELS* Established Category in Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)*



*Sample was reduced due to incomplete data.

For more information, visit www.sopriswest.com/readwell