# Three *Six-Minute Solution* Field Tests

### Field Test I

A description of the *Six-Minute Solution* intervention program was published as "Working with Words: A Summer Reading Intervention Program" (Adams, Brown, and Van Zant, 2000) and as "Summer Reading Intervention Program Prepares Fifth Grade Students for Middle School Reading Challenges" (Adams, Brown, and Van Zant, 1999). *Six-Minute Solution* is also featured as part of "Teaching Reading in Every Classroom," an online staff development program, at the San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego, California.

*Location*

In the summer of 1999, the authors developed a summer reading intervention program for at-risk middle school readers at Meadowbrook Middle School (in Poway, California, a town 20 miles north of downtown San Diego). The *Six-Minute Solution* model was a critical component. Meadowbrook, built in 1964, is the oldest middle school in the Poway Unified School District. The 1,515 students represent a rich diversity of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. Thirty-one percent of the students are non-Anglo, the largest ethnic group being Filipino. Of the 1,515 students, 108 students speak a language other than English in their homes.

*Participants*

Fifty-two students (who were reading at least two years below grade level) were selected to attend this 24-day summer school intervention program. Additionally, 30 of the 52 intervention program participants (58 percent) had previously been identified as eligible for special education services or English Language Learner (ELL) support. Students were in this reading class two hours a day, Monday through Friday. The teacher-student ratio was 1 to 26 for each class. Students were divided into two homogeneous classes based on instructional levels.

*Procedure*

Using the assessment procedures described in this book, students were assigned fluency partners. These student partners practiced fluency daily—either with *Automatic Word Lists* or with *Practice Passages* at their instructional reading levels. Students also were taught a multisyllabic word decoding strategy using the *REWARDS: Reading Excellence, Word Attack, and Rate Development Strategies* program (Archer, Gleason, and Vachon; 2000). Students received direct instruction in reading comprehension strategies and in paragraph writing. Additionally, students participated in "novel partnerships" in which they read trade books to each other in five-minute segments and practiced oral comprehension strategies.

Reading gains recorded by the summer school intervention students were outstanding in many cases. Pre-assessment fluency scores on a sixth-grade passage ranged from a low of 40 correct words per minute (cwpm) to a high of 136 cwpm. Post-assessment rates ranged from a low of 61 cwpm to a high of 195 cwpm. The average reading fluency gain was 36 percent.

Comprehension gains were also considerable. Pre-assessment reading comprehension scores ranged from a Lexile level of 260 (first grade) to a high of 905 (fifth grade). Post-assessment scores ranged from a low of 395 (second grade) to a high of 1,050 (sixth grade). One class gained an average of 166 Lexile points (a gain equivalent to between one and two grade years). The second class gained an average of 133 Lexile points (a one-half to one-year grade equivalent). As measured by pre- and post-Lexile readability scales, the overall growth in reading comprehension was 26 percent.

**Note:** A **Lexile** is a measure of the reading difficulty of a text. It is a number on a scale representing the semantic difficulty and the syntactic complexity of the text. The Lexile scale ranges from 0 to 2,000 and can be correlated to a text's readability. Instead of assigning a readability level to a text such as "4.2" or "6.7," signifying a grade level, the Lexile assigns a number such as 853. This Lexile means that the text is on a fifth-to-sixth-grade reading level. When an assessment reports a score as a Lexile, the Lexile reading score can then be matched to a list of titles that fall within the Lexile reading range. The Lexile Framework Web Site, www.lexile.com, offers a wealth of information about this reading tool.

### Field Test II

*Location*

In the 2000–2001 school year, teachers from Dana Middle School in the San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, California, were trained in the *Six-Minute Solution* fluency-partner model as part of their participation in the "Teaching Reading in Every Classroom" online staff development program. Dana Middle School has 864 fifth- and sixth-graders. Fifty percent of the student body is Caucasian. Twenty-nine percent are Hispanic, and 9 percent are African-American. A Title I school, Dana Middle School is one in which 48 percent of students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. Dana Middle School identified its lowest performing readers by examining their Scholastic Achievement Test (Harcourt, 2001) and Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (Bjorn and Gardner, 2001) scores from the 1999–2000 school year.

*Participants and Procedure*

Of the 864 students who attend Dana Middle School, 120 were placed into six groups of 20 students each. They formed six sections of an elective class called Dana Readers' Club (DRC). These students received one additional hour of reading support, four days a week. Students were paired with partners and practiced reading both instructionally appropriate passages and sight words using the *Six-Minute Solution* model. Students received additional instruction in reading multisyllabic words and specific skill instruction in the form of mini-lessons and guided practice.

Data was collected on 92 students. Students in quartile one made an average of 1.52 years growth during the span of one school year. Students in the other groups did not make as impressive growth, but 91 of the 92 students (99 percent) demonstrated measurable growth in oral-reading fluency, with 61 of the 92 students (66 percent) evidencing a 25 percent or better increase in their oral reading rate. Moreover, 42 of the 92 students' (46 percent) post-

reading-fluency scores placed them within the average oral-reading-fluency range for sixth-grade students. The teachers who participated in this project became convinced of the power of repeated readings, timed sight words, and word study. Anecdotal reports by teachers and students
suggest that students spent more time actively reading, showed more pleasure in reading, and were more likely to perceive themselves as readers.

## Field Test III

*Location*
In the 2001–2002 school year, the *Six-Minute Solution* was implemented in two upper-grade classrooms at Los Penasquitos Elementary School over a three-month period. Los Penasquitos Elementary School is in the Poway Unified School District in California. At Los Penasquitos, there are 635 students, representing 21 languages, in grades kindergarten through five. Los Penasquitos is a Title I school, with 41 percent of students qualifying for the free and reduced lunch program.

*Participants and Procedure*
The *Six-Minute Solution* was implemented in two classrooms: a heterogeneous fourth-grade classroom of 31 students and a combined fourth–fifth grade class in the Los Penasquitos Academy. In the fourth-grade classroom, the smallest gain was 18 percent and the largest gain was 91 percent. The average gain in oral reading fluency for the class was 38 percent. Twenty-six of the 31 students (84 percent) increased their oral reading rates by more than 25 percent. In the fourth–fifth grade Academy class, students attend school 48 percent more hours than do students in traditional classes (1,600 hours vs. 1,080 hours). Both a longer school day and a longer school year give Academy students the extended time necessary to acquire the knowledge, skills, and character traits that are essential for success in rigorous high school programs, and for admission to competitive universities. In the fourth–fifth grade Academy classroom, 24 of the 25 students (95 percent) demonstrated a significant gain in oral reading fluency as measured by a comparison of pre- and post-cwpm scores on grade-level passages.