



Evaluation of the 'Reading is Magic' Afterschool Program at Arts & Sciences 2017

Introduction

This paper summarizes the evaluation of a literacy intervention conducted for the last six years by Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences (Arts & Sciences). The intervention consists of a two-week-long summer camp and Afterschool Program called 'Reading is Magic'

Each summer, students who are identified as being one or more years behind in reading and in need of serious reading remediation, attend either a free, two-week summer reading camp or after school program during the school year. This camp is funded by the City of Santa Fe Children and Youth Commission, the County of Santa Fe Youth and Education grants, Santa Fe Community Foundation, Amma Foundation, and Meow Wolf. Arts & Sciences also provides in kind support for the program.

The program is filled with individualized, intensive, yet fun, reading instruction using EL Education and developmentally appropriate best literacy teaching practices.

The theme "Reading is Magic" is supported by a focus on the Middle Ages, which is integrated into all activities. The learning centers and reading materials provide opportunities to engage in a variety of learning modalities so that every child is reached. The program provides instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary building and linguistic awareness. We provide

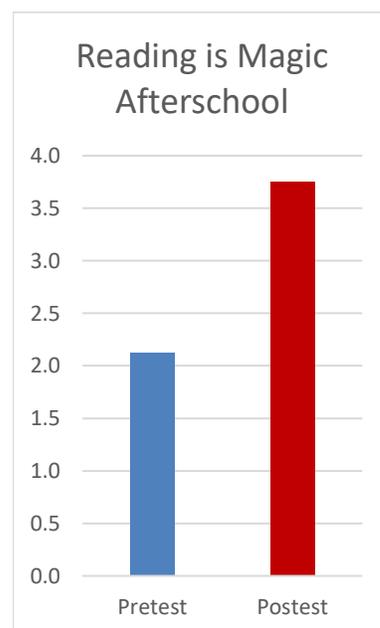
experiences of being read to and independently reading meaningful and engaging stories and informational texts.

Since quite a few of our students are English Language Learners, there are teachers and teen counselors who can speak Spanish. We include vocabulary building and multi-cultural pride and awareness as a vital part of the program. This program provides opportunities for students to grapple with complex informational text at the same time they are learning to read.

A major component of the camp is character building. In the summer camp, the Middle Ages theme gives the students the opportunity to work toward the goal of becoming a Prince, Princess or a Knight through effort and perseverance. They work their way through the "Royal Road," the path of becoming a Page, then a Squire and a Scribe, until finally they earn the title of Knight, Prince or Princess. The campers earn these titles by working hard and acting with integrity, honesty, effort and grit - the character values of a knight.

Many of these students have been retained or are at risk of being retained.

We focus on creating a new growth mindset for these students that helps them internalize the truth that effort will lead to great progress.



Program Evaluation

The Reading is Magic summer camp has been conducted for five consecutive summers by SFSAS. The Afterschool program was piloted in October 2016. In 2016 we engaged 37 students entering grades 3rd through 6th grades. All of the students who were referred to the camp were students who were identified by their teachers as needing serious remediation in reading. Many of these students were 1-2 years, or more, behind in reading and some were at risk of retention or were in the process of being retained. Some of the students already had IEP's and some were in the process of being referred for an IEP. 46% of the students were English Language Learners. The afterschool program served 14 students weekly in a program in which students from three schools were picked up from their schools in an Arts & Sciences school bus.

The average growth for all students during the two-week intervention was nine tenths (.90) of a year. The average growth for students in the 7-month afterschool program was more than a year and a half (1.67)

Reading is Magic created an individualized reading program for each child that was supported by a wide range of hands-on activities and intensive phonics training. Each day the students learned new phonics rules and tricks and gained confidence in reading. They read aloud to teachers, played reading computer games and phonics based active games and board games, such as Reading Baseball, Word Jousting and the Nitro Reading Road Race Game. Most of the activities and games used in the camp were games which could easily be adjusted for different student needs and reading levels. We sang songs about reading rules, used American Sign Language to learn the short vowel sounds and wrote stories and plays. Each day was filled with fun reading-related activities and the students also completed homework that addressed their particular reading needs. We sent students home with books and are communicating with their schools regarding their progress.

Before the camp began the participants were tested to determine their beginning level of reading fluency. On the last two days of the camp participants were tested again to measure their growth during the two weeks or 7-month programs. Students were tested using the Oral Reading Assessment (ORA) developed by Edward Fry, PhD. The test involved students reading paragraphs of increasing difficulty and resulted in a score expressed as a grade level.

The average growth for all students during the two-week intervention was nine tenths of a year. The average growth for students in the 7-month intervention was 1.67 years. 42% of the students in the afterschool program achieved 2 or more years of growth in the 7-month program and the other 58% achieved 1.5 years of growth on average.

Results of Parent Survey

On a 1-10 scale, 100% of parents said they were satisfied overall with the camp, with 32 giving a 10 and 5 giving 9. Perception of child's reading improvement: 100% rated 8-10, with 28 giving a 10, 7 giving a 9 and 2 giving an 8. Teachers: 100% of parents gave teachers a high rating, with 36 parents giving a 10, and 1 giving a 9. Classroom: 100% of parents gave classroom a high rating, with 32 parents giving a 10, and 5 giving a 9. 100% of parents said they would recommend the camp to friends and family.

Appreciations and Acknowledgements Ceremony

The Reading is Magic students in the afterschool program wrote the appreciations and reflections for the celebration. Please click [here](#) to watch the YouTube video. Here are examples of what they shared, "Before Reading is Magic, I hated reading. Now I enjoy reading. When I first started I was really behind, but now I am way ahead."

"I appreciate my tutor Micah who is my best friend. He helped me out with new words and now I am getting better grades on my school work."

"When I grow up I will be a book seller, and I will save money to buy a nice home for me and my family and I will buy books for Reading is Magic."