

CLOSING THE GAP FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Read Right Reading Intervention Program is Highly Effective with English Language Learners

One of the most rewarding moments for a secondary educator comes when a previously struggling student says, “Because of you, I am going to college.”

Jesus was one of those students. Last month, Jesus and other students and educators from Manson, Washington, joined Manson Secondary Principal Marsha Hanson in a group presentation at the annual Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) conference. The group presented on the Read Right Intervention Program’s unique system of effectively eliminating reading problems while *simultaneously* fostering acquisition of English language.

Growing Numbers of English Language Learners

Manson is a small, largely low-income farming community in north central Washington State (65% of students are Hispanic and 74% of students qualify for free- and reduced-price school lunch). Nine years ago, Jesus’s prospects for college were slim. A native Spanish-speaker, he struggled with both English *and* reading. The double deficit made school extremely difficult for him, as it did for many of his monolingual and bilingual classmates.

But something happened that changed the course of Jesus’s life. Faced with a rapidly growing population of English language learners, the Manson School District and its secondary principal, Marsha Hanson, sought an intervention program to help students. In their search, they found Read Right.

Simultaneously Addressing Reading Problems and Fostering Language Acquisition

Read Right is a small-group tutoring method that empowers certified teachers, and instructional assistants to help students eliminate their reading problems in the process of acquiring language. By design, the method facilitates language acquisition as it promotes the higher-level literacy required to be successful in school and in life.

Quick Results

Jesus was enrolled in the Read Right program a few years ago, and he quickly improved in his ability to communicate in English and eliminated his reading problem. Today, Jesus is a college student at Eastern Washington University. When asked at the recent WSSDA conference how he felt Read Right was different from anything teachers had tried before, he said: “It seems very simple. I learned what it was to be an excellent reader. . . .Once I knew that, I began searching for excellent reading.”

Five years ago, senior and former Read Right student, Rebecca, was monolingual in Spanish. It took Rebecca just one year to eliminate her reading problem with Read Right and simultaneously improve her English language skills. “I know how to read perfectly,” she told WSSDA conference attendees. High SAT scores in reading and her success with college-level coursework as a Manson High School junior and senior indicate that she is right. Rebecca, too, is college bound and this year she is using Read Right strategies to help younger Manson monolingual Spanish-speakers overcome their reading problems and acquire English.

Read Right Is Effective With Lowest Performing Readers

Because it is so effective, many sites like Manson choose to focus resources on the lowest-performing readers.

Hanson said, a total of 19 of her secondary school’s Read Right students took the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Of the 19, 78% or 15 passed the reading portion – a noteworthy achievement for a school’s *lowest-performing readers*. Additionally, two of the four students who didn’t pass in reading scored 390 or above – barely below the score of 400 that is required to pass.

Spontaneous words from one of Manson’s board members attending the conference session sum up the Manson community’s appreciation: “I’d like to thank Marsha and her staff for **searching out programs that work.**”