



EARLY INTERVENTION CASE STUDY: Biloxi Public Schools, MS

District: Biloxi Public Schools, MS

City/State: Biloxi, MS

Years: 2003–2006

Assessment: District Special Education Referral Rate and Disproportionality Differential

Grades: K-2

Elementary Schools: 7

Demographic Data: 61% Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch; 5% African American, 8% Asian, 54% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic; High mobility rate due to military base and Hurricane Katrina impact

Objectives

During the building of the district's Response to Intervention (Rtl) program, Headsprout Early Reading was implemented in one school during 2003 and two additional schools the following year. Headsprout Early Reading is now used in all seven elementary schools in Biloxi Public Schools to support the following Rtl objectives:

- Reduce disproportionality (disproportional number of African American students represented in special education).
- Provide early intervention in Grades 1-2 for students in Tiers 1, 2, and 3 to ensure students at risk for reading failure are provided a solid foundation for reading success.

In 2014, Learning A-Z merged Headsprout's two elementary reading products — Headsprout Early Reading and Headsprout Reading Comprehension — into one adaptive, effective, and fun K-5 online reading program. From introducing early readers to key reading fundamentals to growing reading comprehension skills for more established readers, Headsprout is the perfect resource to help children become capable and confident readers.

Implementation Model

Tier 1 – All students receive universal screening. Students falling below a specific cut-score become candidates for Tier 2 intervention, where the Headsprout program is used most frequently. The principal in the lowest SES school chose to use the Headsprout program as a Tier 1 supplement for whole groups in Grade 1 using the school computer lab.

Tier 2 – Students requiring targeted intervention use the Headsprout program 4 – 5 days a week for 30-minute periods. Weekly progress monitoring, using oral fluency measures, tracks student response to the intervention, with teachers expecting to see a response within 6-8 weeks. Fidelity of implementation is also monitored. Instructional intensity may be increased using the companion books and flashcards.

Tier 3 – The small percentage of students requiring intensive intervention use the Headsprout program together with other resources or one-on-one assistance.

Results

In the three pilot schools, the number of students reading at benchmark has substantially increased. The number of students being referred for special education decreased by 79% (from 40 to 7 students). There has also been a 54% decrease in the level of disproportionality, a key goal for implementing RtI in the district.

Change in Disproportionality Differential

Differential	'03 – '04	'04 – '05	'05 – '06	'04 – '06 Change
	5.05%	4.52%	2.33%	-54%

Reduction in Special Education Referrals for 3 Pilot Schools

