



Spring 2011

# PILOT METROPOLITAN NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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.



## Pilot Overview

In an effort to establish and strengthen fundamental reading and critical-thinking skills, Headsprout Reading Comprehension individualized instruction was selected as a core companion for third and fourth-grade students at 11 high-priority Metropolitan Nashville Public School (MNPS) campuses. During the spring of 2011, over 2,000 students from 11 elementary schools began working through the online instructional sequences, referred to as episodes. Results from the 2011 Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Reading/Language subtest, conducted from April 25 – May 6, 2011, indicated that schools that used the Headsprout program showed significantly more skill growth than schools that did not use the program.

### About Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools\*

#### Total Enrollment

Preschool	197
Pre-Kindergarten	2,071
Elementary School	32,938
Middle School	22,075
High School	20,336
Total (as of Oct. 2010)	77,617

#### Student Ethnic Composition

Asian	2,992	3.8%
Black	36,306	46.5%
Hispanic	12,732	16.3%
Indian	108	0.14%
Pacific Island	85	0.11%
White	25,777	33.1%

English Learners (EI)	7,700	9.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	54,202	69.5%

\* Data collected from 2010-2011 District Fact Sheet

## The Program

Headsprout Reading Comprehension's individualized instruction is adaptive, Web-based software that's designed to teach students how to comprehend text. The program teaches strategies to help master factual, inferential, main idea, and derived meaning (vocabulary) comprehension. Learners gain the ability to comprehend what they read and demonstrate that understanding across the curriculum and in high-stakes standardized tests.

Through 50 interactive online episodes, the program teaches essential comprehension skills using text drawn from mid-second-grade up to mid-fourth-grade levels. Printable stories, recommendations for extending what is learned online to the classroom, and individualized, automated performance reports accompany the program.

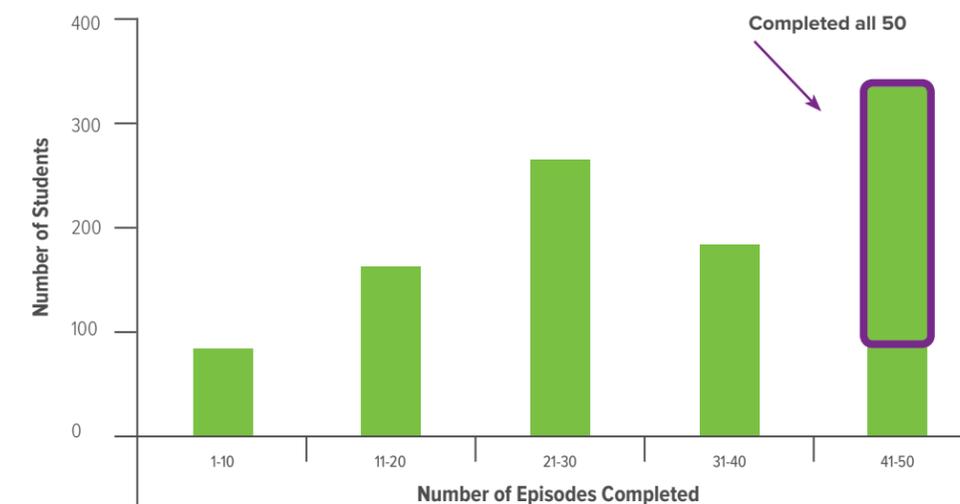
## Professional Development

All educators taking part in the pilot were invited to participate in an initial five-hour professional development seminar that included informational sessions, hands-on practice with program-related activities, and objective-based exercises. Follow-up workshops (40 to 90 minutes long) were conducted at each school, and two schools elected to participate in workshops focused on additional student exercises. Meetings with the principals and district staff were also conducted to encourage the development of successful Headsprout Reading Comprehension systems.

## Implementation & Usage Summary

All third- and fourth-grade students that passed the Headsprout Reading Comprehension Readiness Assessment were eligible to enroll in the program. The program was launched on January 3, 2011, and students began to complete episodes during class, computer lab sessions, after school, and, in some cases, at home. From January 3 to May 1, 2011, students completed an average of 3.2 episodes per week, which is slightly above Headsprout's recommendation of 3 episodes per week. The figure below shows the distribution of instructional episodes completed by the 1,027 fourth-grade students enrolled in Headsprout Reading Comprehension individualized instruction during the spring of 2011.

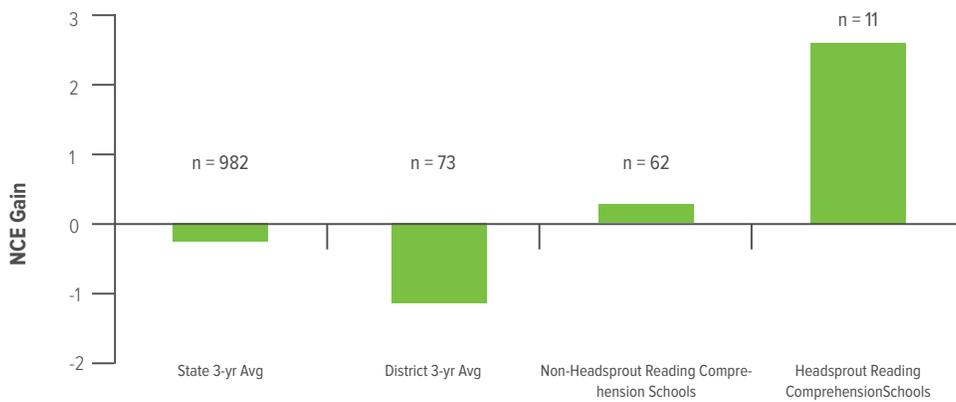
### Distribution of Episodes Completed as of May 1, 2011



## Results

The schools that were targeted for improvement showed significant gains on the fourth-grade TCAP Reading/Language assessment. Gains were determined using the Norm Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores from the 2011 end-of-year assessment. On average, students from the 11 schools using Headsprout Reading Comprehension individualized instruction made 7.6 times more growth than students from the other 62 schools in the district/county. A t-test on the difference between means was statistically significant:  $t(10) = 2.614$ ,  $p < .05$ .

## Fourth-Grade NCE Gains in TCAP Reading/Language Arts



In addition, 91% of the schools showed improved fourth-grade TCAP scores, up from only 18% in the prior year. The next figure shows the average NCE gains for the 11 pilot schools during the two academic years before using Headsprout Reading Comprehension, and the NCE gains after the first year of the Headsprout Reading Comprehension pilot.

## Norm Curve Equivalent (NCE) Gains by School



Third-grade growth measures are not available due to the absence of TCAP Reading/Language testing in second grade. Publicly available TCAP/TVAAS data were retrieved September 15 - December 5, 2011 from the Tennessee Department of Education.