

Test Results Confirm Improvement for English Language Learners (ELLs)

Summary

The students in Clark County (Las Vegas) Nevada School District piloting the Longman Cornerstone program in the spring of 2008 showed a dramatic improvement in academic performance over a three-month period. The program was piloted with English language learners, most of whom were Newcomers. Results from three independent assessments showed improvement in the following keys areas: Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) scores, Sight Word Recognition, and Language Assessment tests.

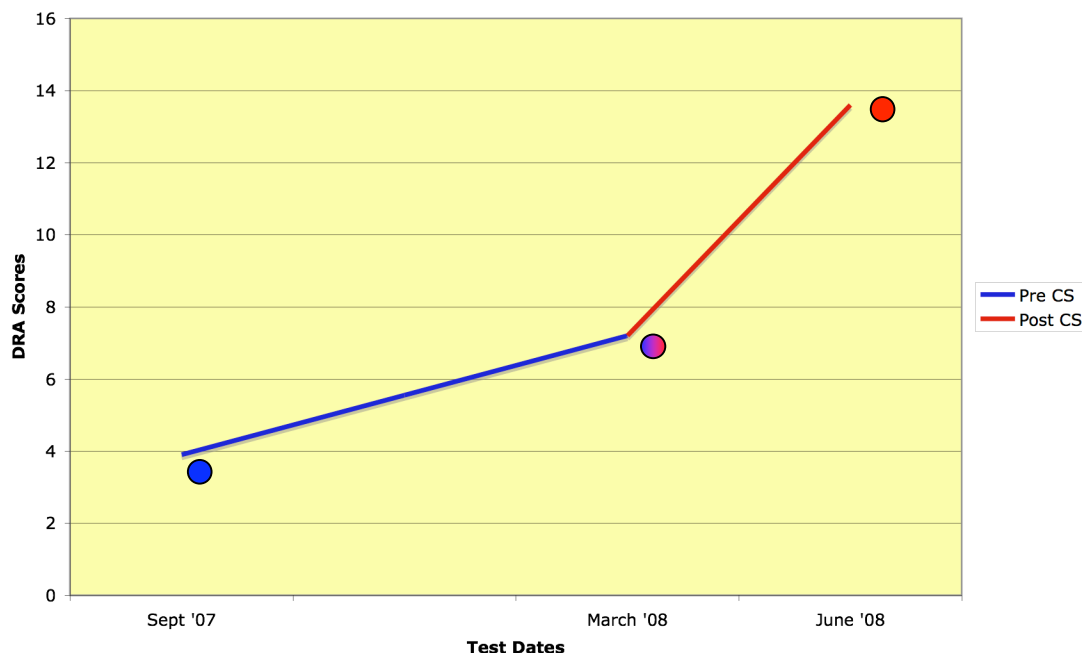
Methodology and Results

Students were given a benchmark test at the beginning of the year (Pre-Test), another test prior to beginning the pilot (Post-Test 1), and a test at the end of the three month pilot using the Longman Cornerstone program (Post-Test 2). As the graph below illustrates, there was a significant improvement in DRA scores. (See figure A)

Developmental Reading Assessment

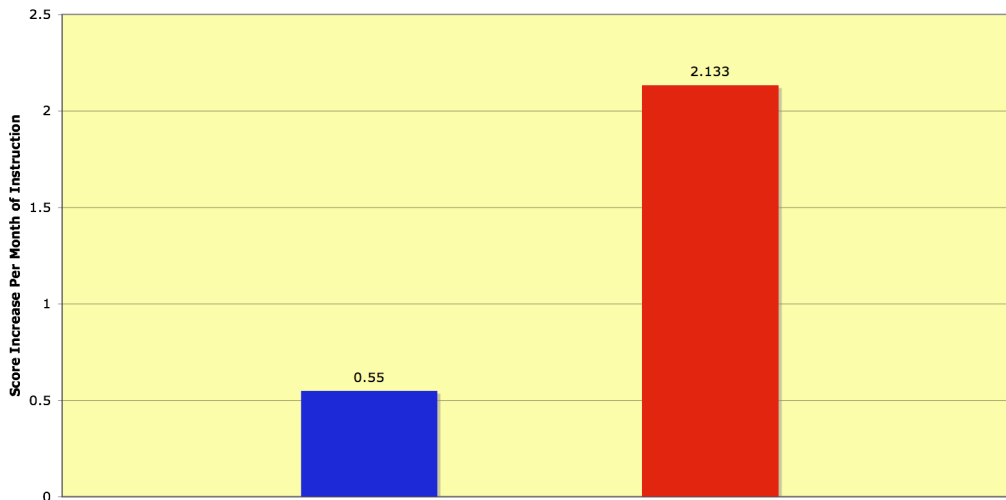
Figure A shows that students' DRA scores increased throughout the year. The most dramatic improvement, however, came during the three months of piloting Longman Cornerstone program. Students were given a pretest at the beginning of the year resulting in a classroom average of 3.9 on the DRA. After six months, the class average increased a little more than three points to 7.2 on Post Test 1. Over the next three months, the average class DRA score soared to 13.6 indicating a 6.4 point increase after using the Longman Cornerstone program.

Figure A **Average Class Gains in Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) Scores**



What is particularly interesting about these data is the accelerated rate of improvement that occurred once students began using *Longman Cornerstone*. Figure B shows that students were making gains of a little more than half a point per month with their existing program, but once they began using *Longman Cornerstone*, they improved more than two points per month. The conclusion is that the longer students use the program, the greater the acceleration in their reading proficiencies.

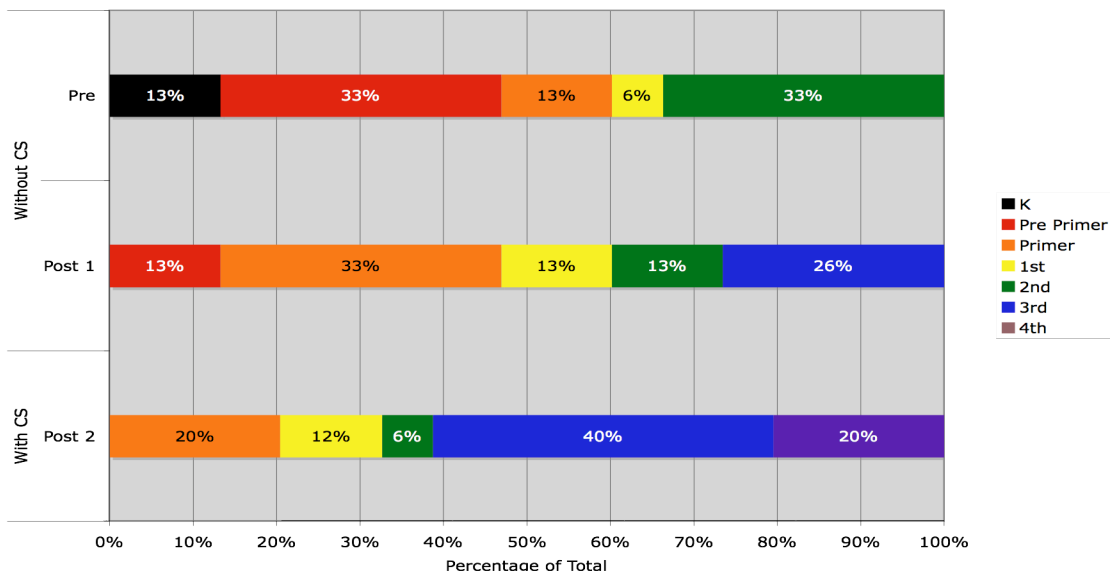
Figure B **Rate of Gains in DRA Scores**



Sight Word Recognition

Independent sight words assessments were given at three points during the year: Pre-Test (September 2007), Post-Test 1 (April 2008), and Post-Test 2 (June 2008). The results for gains in sight words recognition are equally impressive (See Figure C).

Figure C **Sight Word Recognition**



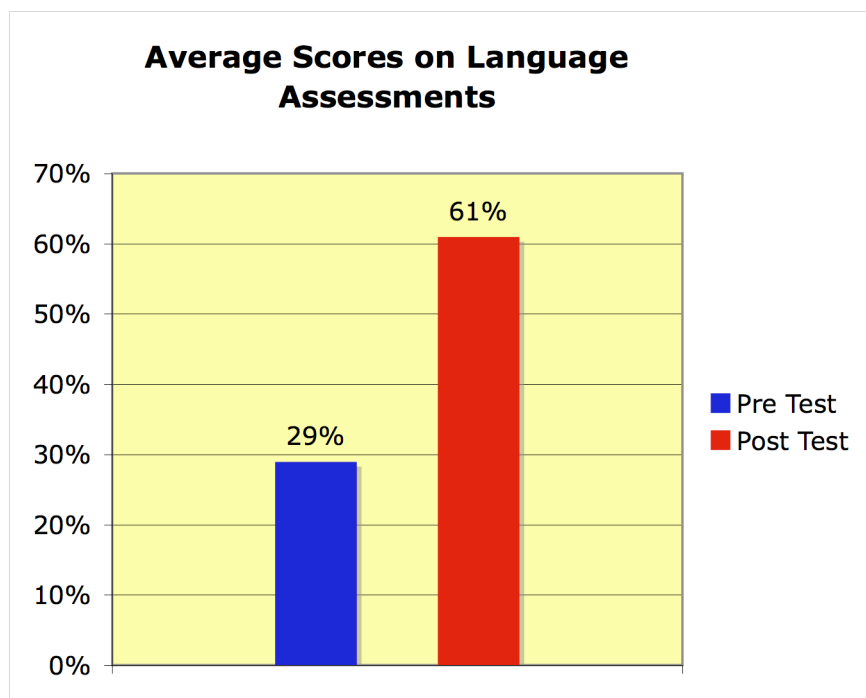
Students' sight word knowledge was measured and their results were grouped categorically into seven corresponding levels of proficiency: Kindergarten, Pre-primer, Primer, First, Second, Third, and Fourth. These categories were determined based on grade level norm ranges of sight word knowledge.

As figure C illustrates, students experience an accelerated movement towards greater sight word proficiency after using the *Longman Cornerstone* program. Worth noting is the dramatic increase in students moving out of the K, Pre-primer, and Primer levels when students began using *Longman Cornerstone*. In the prior six months, only 13% of the students moved out of these lower levels. In only three months with *Longman Cornerstone*, however, an additional 20% of the students moved to higher levels. Further, the increase in the students reading at a second grade level and above accelerated dramatically as well. Over the first six months, the percentage of students in the higher levels grew modestly from 33% to 39%. In the three months with *Longman Cornerstone*, this figure jumped to 66%.

Language Assessment Test

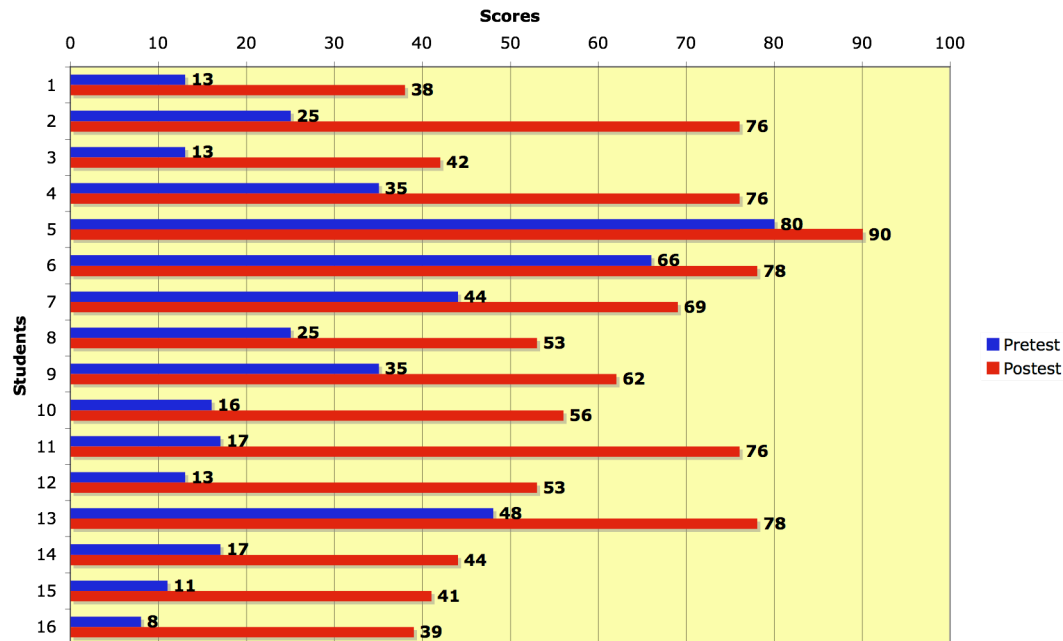
The Language Assessment pretest was administered in February 2008, prior to the start of the *Longman Cornerstone* pilot, and the posttest was administered in June 2008. Figure D illustrates the overall improvement of performance on the Language Assessment Test, indicating a 108% increase in average class test scores and a 181% increase in median test scores.

Figure D



Even more striking is a comparison of the individual student results on the Language Assessment Pre Test and Post Test, particularly among the lower-performing students. Every student in the study showed an increase in their test scores after using *Longman Cornerstone*, however, students scoring in the 25th percentile on the Pre Test gained an average of 36 points on the Post Test.

Figure E **Individual Language Assessment Scores**



Conclusion

Students using the *Longman Cornerstone* program in the Spring of 2008 showed significant gains in academic reading skills and language proficiency over a three-month period, compared to the prior six months of instruction using their district-adopted materials.

The DRA reading test indicated an increase of one to two grade levels in reading proficiency as well as overall improved comprehension. These students also showed improvements in language, grammar, and writing skills. These students also improved sight word recognition by one to two grade levels during the three months of the study.

Given the high ELL enrollment in this school district, one can conclude that districts with similar demographics should see comparable results and improved student performance, particularly among the lower proficiency students, after using *Longman Cornerstone*.