

EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

SUMMARY

Independent Study: Texas Superkids School Scores Higher Than Comparison Schools on SAT-9

by the Institute for the Advancement of Research in Education

In spring of 2004, the Rowland Reading Foundation commissioned the Institute for the Advancement of Research in Education (IARE) to conduct an independent evaluation.

Study Profile

Samples:

Survey: Approximately 18 teachers

Cohort Analysis: 3 schools

Characteristics of students in cohort analysis:

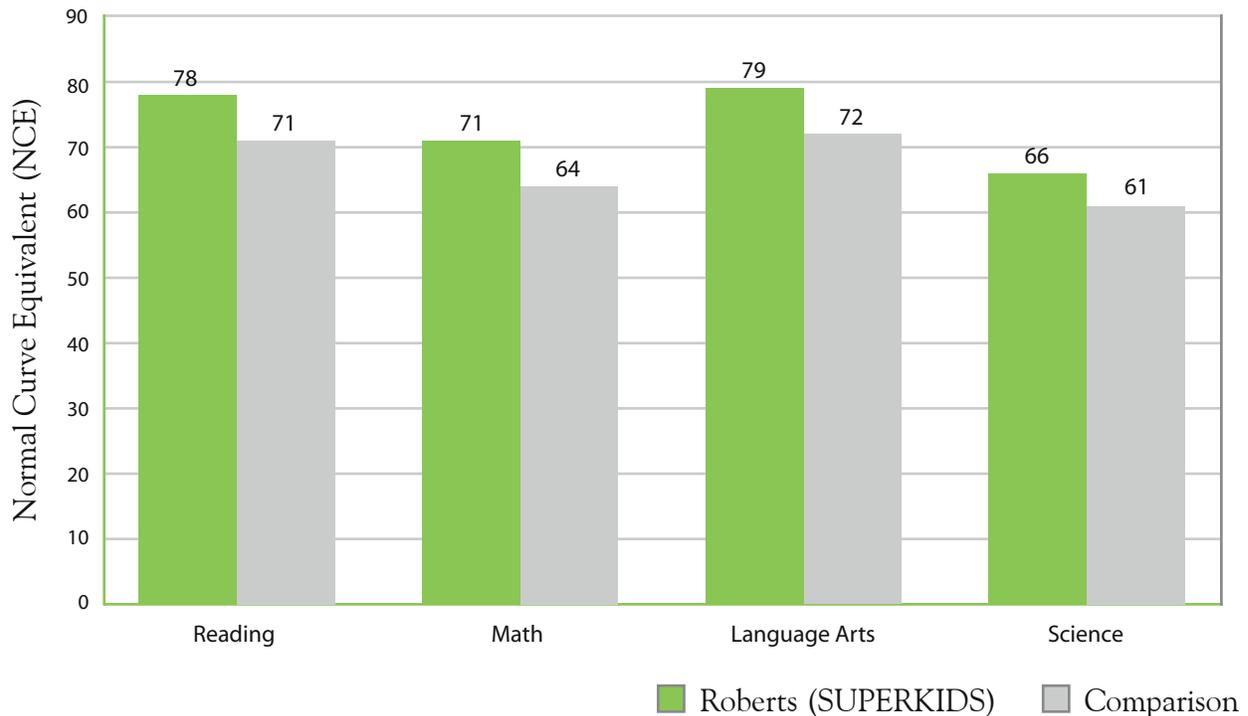
48% minority

23% free or reduced lunch

Key Results

- Interviews of educators revealed that the Superkids program has a loyal and devoted following of teachers.
- Roberts Elementary School in Houston, Texas, which uses Superkids in kindergarten, experienced higher average scores on the first-grade SAT-9 than two comparison schools.

Average SAT-9 NCE Scores for First-Grade Cohorts
1999 - 2001



(more information on back)

Methodology

In spring of 2004, the Rowland Reading Foundation commissioned the Institute for the Advancement of Research in Education (IARE) to conduct an independent evaluation of the Superkids, a beginning reading program for kindergarten and first grade. There were two main parts of the evaluation. The first was a series of structured interviews of approximately 18 teachers at schools known to use the Superkids program. Some of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, others by telephone. The second part consisted of analysis of publicly available SAT-9 test-score data obtained from the website of a large, urban school district in Texas. Data from one school using the Superkids program and two comparable schools not using it were analyzed.

Results

The teacher and administrator interviews revealed that the Superkids program has a loyal and devoted following of teachers. All individuals and groups interviewed mentioned the phonics component of the Superkids program as one of its great strengths, because phonics is taught explicitly and systematically, as recommended by the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

Teachers reported that another of the program's greatest strengths is that it reflects ethnic diversity and students are excited when they see someone who looks like them in their reading materials. When asked how teachers determine whether the program is successful, the kindergarten teachers at one school responded that they know the Superkids program is successful because children learn to read.

The general strategy for the SAT-9 data analysis was to track test scores for a cohort of students as they moved from grade one to grade three. Given the data available, it was possible to track three separate cohort groups at each school beginning with the 1998-1999 academic year for one cohort group and ending with the 2002-2003 academic year for the third cohort group. Analysis revealed that the school using the Superkids program experienced higher average scores on the SAT-9 than the comparison schools in nearly every subject in every grade analyzed. The results for the Grade 1 Cohort are shown in the graph on the front page. The results suggest a positive impact of the Superkids, and are consistent with the teachers' beliefs that the program has a positive effect on their students' acquisition of reading skills.



ROWLAND READING FOUNDATION

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