

KEY FINDINGS

- Ninth graders achieve a year's growth in reading in just five months
- *Edge* motivates and engages adolescent striving readers
- *Edge* provides powerful reading intervention for high schools

Ninth Graders Make the Grade with *Edge*



Challenge

Thornton Fractional Township High School District 215, just south of Chicago, Illinois, has two Title I high schools, North and South, in state Corrective Action status after not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets for multiple years. In 2008, over 70% of students entering high school performed below the "Proficient" level on their eighth grade state reading test.

Dr. Norrell, Executive Director for Curriculum & Instruction, and her team needed to make substantive instructional and curricular changes so more students could meet AYP targets. They sought a data-driven Reading/Language Arts intervention program that incorporated research-based practices, matched student needs, and aligned with State Learning Standards. The team also recognized that underperforming adolescents must be engaged and motivated with high-interest, multicultural selections relevant to a diverse student population.

Solution

District 215 selected Hampton Brown *Edge*™ because it fit with their focused intervention plan to improve students' reading skills. Dr. Norrell said, "It was easy to align the *Edge* curriculum with state standards and to verify that the program met state requirements for Corrective Action intervention programs."

About 900 students (80% of all ninth graders) used *Edge* during the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years in a Reading Enrichment class, for which they received an elective credit. Students also took a separate ninth grade English credit course.

"The ultimate reason we selected *Edge* was its underlying philosophy and the many levels of engagement that keep students involved."

—Dr. Norrell, Executive Director for Curriculum & Instruction

Additionally, the team was impressed by an *Edge* program author, Dr. Alfred Tatum, when they heard him speak about the importance of engaging and motivating struggling adolescent readers with challenging, diverse, and meaningful texts. Dr. Norrell explained, "Our initial excitement—and the ultimate reason we selected *Edge*—was its underlying philosophy and the many levels of engagement that keep students involved in their own reading process."

Results

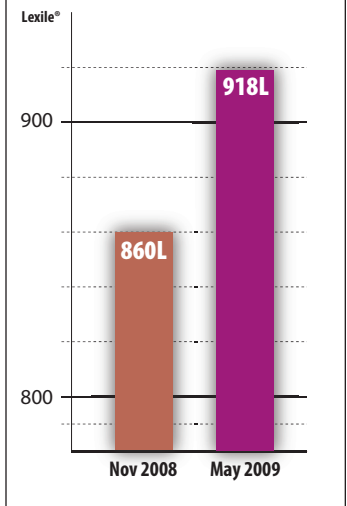
Edge has improved the reading skills of District 215's ninth graders. To measure progress, the Reading Level Gains Test (RLGT), a valid and reliable measure of adolescents' reading proficiency, was given twice during the 2008–2009 school year. Student Lexile® reading levels increased an average of 58L during the five-month interval between tests, which is about the expected growth for an entire school year.

Dr. Norrell has heard much positive feedback about *Edge*. "In the past, remedial programs and intervention efforts were more worksheet-based and boring for students. With *Edge*, teachers get more student buy-in to improve reading skills. Students take *Edge* reading selections seriously—meaningful class discussions demonstrate that students are using targeted reading comprehension strategies and incorporating academic vocabulary."

Mrs. Whalen, Assistant Principal at South High School noted evidence of improvement that goes beyond test scores, "The diverse text selections in *Edge* have opened the students' eyes to different cultures and perspectives, leading to great classroom dialogue that enhances not just vocabulary, but also increases their awareness of the world."

District 215 continues to use *Edge* with ninth grade striving readers. Dr. Norrell anticipates increased measurable improvement on future high-stakes tests and looks forward to continued evidence of students' reading/language arts growth. District 215's ultimate goal is for students to meet AYP targets so its schools can be removed from state Corrective Action status.

More than one year's growth in five months



Reading Level Gains Growth

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