

KEY FINDINGS

- Special education students achieve over two years' growth in reading in just five months
- *Edge* provides scaffolded content support to meet diverse special education needs
- *Edge* motivates students with learning disabilities to succeed in reading

Special Education Students Succeed 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 90% of District 215's incoming students with disabilities (learning disabilities (LD), autism spectrum, cognitive impairment, etc.), performed below the "Proficient" level on their eighth grade state reading test.

Dr. Norrell, Executive Director for Curriculum & Instruction, and Ms. Wilson, Director of Student Services, needed to aggressively address the learning needs of this student subgroup to increase reading achievement on high-stakes tests and so students could access content

across the general curriculum. District 215 wanted a curricular program for reading instruction in special education classes that was flexible to meet students' individual learning needs. The program also needed to be sophisticated and engaging to motivate adolescents to succeed.

Solution

District 215 selected Hampton Brown *Edge*™ because it offered a range of levels that address academic standards and provided focused instruction to develop reading, vocabulary, and other crucial literacy skills. *Edge* was used as the core English/Language Arts program during the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years for ninth grade special education classes in both high schools. Students were placed in *Edge* Fundamentals or *Edge* Levels A-C based on their initial reading ability.

“Edge meets special education students where they are functioning yet also provides a curriculum on par with their grade-level peers.”

—Ms. Wilson, Director of Student Services

Dr. Norrell explained, “*Edge* doesn't put LD students at a disadvantage by using a curriculum that is far too young—we wanted to provide rich learning opportunities for our lower-level students. *Edge* is age-appropriate and content-rich; it is a powerful way to build students' knowledge and skills.” *Edge* provides academic scaffolding supports to meet a range of student needs—providing the means for rapid growth in reading skills.

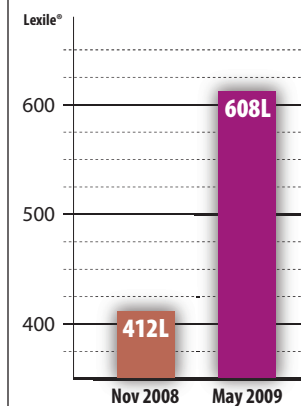
Results

Edge has proven especially powerful for special education students in District 215. During the 2008-2009 school year, the Reading Level Gains Test (RLGT), a valid and reliable measure of adolescents' reading proficiency, was given twice to measure progress. Students' Lexile® reading levels increased an average of 196L during the five-month interval between testing—over twice the expected growth for an entire school year.

Edge engaged and motivated special needs students, enhancing their reading success. With *Edge*, students have been able to read and discuss content similar to what is covered in mainstream classes. Dr. Norrell noted that, “District 215 special education teachers like *Edge* because of its high school level of quality (topics, graphics, vocabulary, etc.); teachers get more buy-in from students when materials are geared to their own age and interests. *Edge* meets students where they are functioning yet also provides a curriculum on par with their grade-level peers.”

Ms. Wilson noted that the results have been a catalyst for continued growth for these students, who were not used to such success, “Not only have students begun to transfer reading strategies from *Edge* to their content area classes, but the improvement in their reading is also showing up on the college readiness assessment students take in ninth grade.” Dr. Norrell sums it up, “*Edge* is making a difference in special education students' lives in District 215.”

More than two years' growth in five months



Reading Level Gains Growth

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