

Executive Summary

Richard J. Daley Academy

Illinois State Low-Cost Laptop Initiative Grant

iRead, iThink, iSpeak:

Discovering Universal Themes through Literature, Research and Writing to Foster Critical Thinking Skills

Introduction

At Daley Academy, our middle school literacy classrooms focus on increasing student's reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, research, and presentation skills. With the iPad Grant, we had the opportunity to incorporate technology with literacy making topics and themes relevant to student's lives.

With the use of their iPads, students created authentic multimedia projects and reports via the use of various iPad apps such as, Keynote, iMovie, Pages, Educreations, and many others. Through inquiry and collaboration, students explored and analyzed universal themes such as, Overcoming Obstacles, Making Responsible Choices, Exploring Social Issues and Conditions and Fairness and Equality at a Global Perspective.

At a Glance

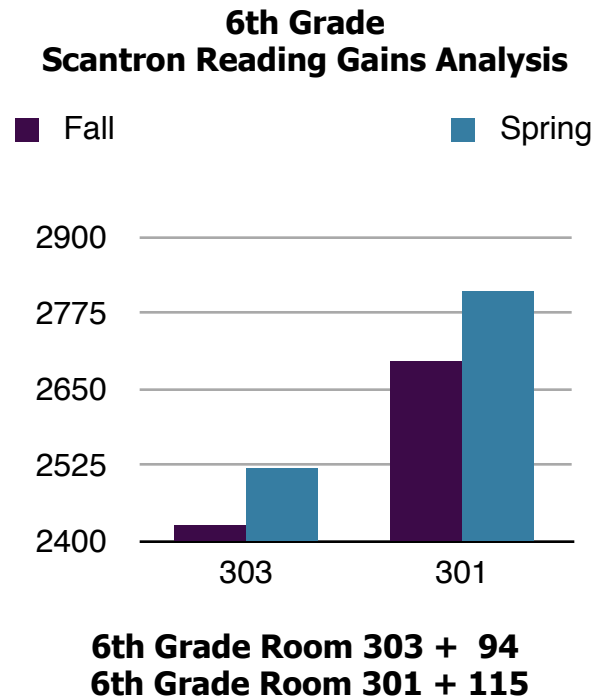
Daley Academy is located in the 'Back of the Yards' Neighborhood serving 775 students of which 99.9% are low income, 7.1% are Special Education and 32.1% are Limited English Learners. Hispanics consist of 84.9% of the population with the remaining 14.8% African American.



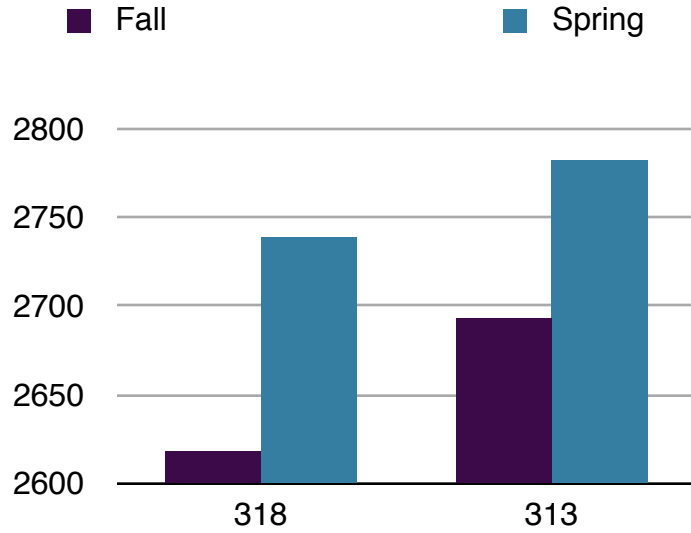
Many of Daley Academy's students speak Spanish as their primary language affecting their English language comprehension and performance on standardized tests. Just as important, the majority of our students have very limited background experiences and knowledge thus preventing their understanding as well as their awareness and view of the world. Furthermore, most students do not have technology and internet access at home.

Quantitative Results

From Fall to Spring significant gains were made in the Reading Scantron Assessment in the iPad User 6th-8th Grade Classrooms. The following specific gains were made:

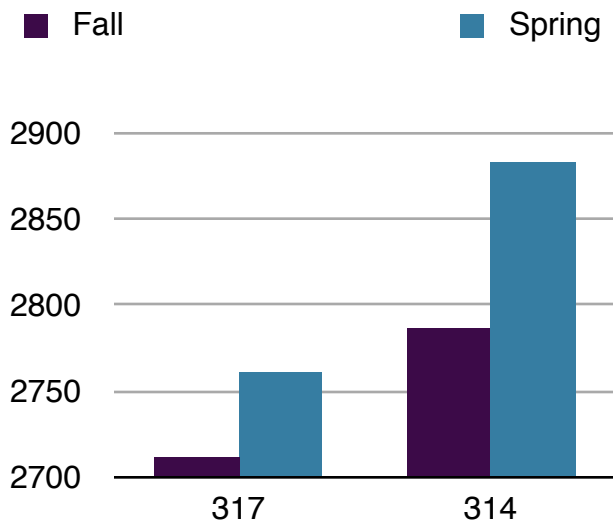


7th Grade Scantron Reading Gains Analysis



7th Grade Room 318 + 121
7th Grade Room 313 + 89

8th Grade Scantron Reading Gains Analysis



8th Grade Room 317 + 49
8th Grade Room 314 + 96

Qualitative Results

Above and beyond the data are the intrinsic measurements of comprehension and understanding along with the motivation to learn which all speak to a higher level of learning that has taken place with the use of the iPads. From using Themed Literary Units based on novels such as, Hatchet, The Diary of Ann Frank, and Tangerine, students were inspired to research subject / theme matter to develop background knowledge and further promote their understanding of universal themes as relevant to their own lives. This provided a global view of their world particularly when students had the opportunity to communicate via e-mail with Chinese PenPals. Students were also able to discuss topics with each other as well as the teacher via edmodo. The culminating event at Daley Academy will be Family Night where iPad Students will present their iPad Projects.

Using the iPads allowed use to not only teach students to 'Read the Lines' but rather 'Read in between the Lines and Beyond the Lines'. Words can hardly express our gratitude for the opportunities the iPads have given us. To see the transformation of our students from passive to active learners, engaged and motivated in their learning is beyond measure. A special thank you to the ISBE Low-cost Laptop Program and particularly Margaret Murphy, Bruce Ahlborn, and Joe Brennan. Their invaluable training and assistance made this fantastic opportunity a huge success for both students and teachers!

THANK YOU!

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