

Two of the barriers that our students have faced in our school when it comes to reading comprehension in all subject areas are background knowledge and word knowledge.

Through the use of the iPads, we have been able to narrow that gap at John L. Marsh. Our school is located in the far southeast side of Chicago. We have a large Hispanic immigrant population. Therefore, a large number of our students are bilingual.

We have observed our students more engaged and more eager to learn with the use of the iPads in the classroom. We have seen about a 10% gain in this year's NWEA scores. This is comparable from Spring 2011-Spring 2012 in both Math and Reading.

The students are able to use the iPads in Reading to learn about the setting such as the places or time period. They are better able to comprehend decisions the characters make based on their surroundings and be able to elaborate on how those decisions would be different in a different setting. They are also able to build on their prior knowledge and make inferences based on research they have been able to gain because of the iPads.

As far as word knowledge, being able to Google images of their vocabulary words and using them to create vocabulary cards to help them understand their meaning, has made a difference in reading comprehension in all subject areas.

In terms of science and social studies, students were able to keep up with current events using Time for Kids, Scholastic websites and the local newspapers to view places and meet people from all over the world.

Memorizing math facts has been a lot more fun. The students were able to practice their basic skills through interactive games. They were also able to practice new skills through the use of tutorials to help them enhance their math skills.

The final projects and the sharing of projects have been more impressive and elaborate. Through collaboration and team work students use apps such as Storybook, Educreate, Story Chomp, Edmodo, Popplet, and Comic Touch, to name a few, to problem solve and make decisions. Compared to last year, we have noticed much more enthusiasm and eagerness to get started and get things done.