

**Research Findings Concerning  
the Impact of the  
Failure Free Reading Program  
on  
At-Risk and Special Education  
Lowest Literacy Students**

The Failure Free Reading Program was designed to give nonreaders and lowest literacy students the opportunity to have an immediate and successful reading experience with age appropriate materials.

Key to the program is its reliance on the three elements found crucial to reading success for this unique population: adequate repetition, appropriate sentence structure and meaningful story content. Failure Free then integrates this with a unique blend of facilitator directed classroom instruction, talking software and instructional print materials. Facilitators can be teachers, teaching assistants or noncertified tutors.

Failure Free is strongly based on the premise that illiteracy is but a symptom - language deprivation is the disease. Failure Free is for those students who are suffering from a lack of language and environmental exposure as well as those with unique learning style differences.

Failure Free was designed to function within the parameters found within a typical school environment: large numbers of needy at-risk and special education students, minimum amount of staff training time, noncertified teachers and teaching assistants, and limited financial resources.

The research presented here was designed to observe if Failure Free could significantly impact on the academic performance of large numbers of at-risk and special education students without requiring the expensive, labor-intensive, one-on-one tutoring programs traditionally thought to be necessary to insure success. Enrollment cut across many grade levels and many different regions of the country.

In addition, Failure Free specifically operated under a zero reject policy - no student was denied access to the program because of a previous label or handicapping condition and no student was discontinued while in treatment for any reason other than success.

The research presented here was designed to measure four specific research questions: (1) what effect does Failure Free Reading have on the learning curve of at-risk and special education lowest literacy students?; (2) does this reading improvement transfer to other standardized measures of achievement?; (3) is the reading growth sustained over a long period of time?; and (4) can Failure Free accelerate the growth curve of the lowest performing students in this population?

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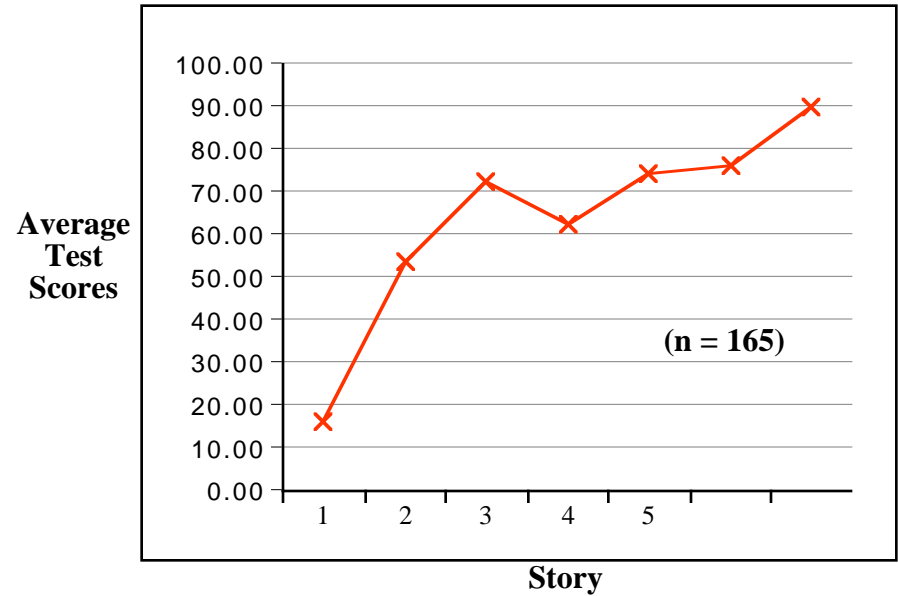
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**The Impact of Failure Free Reading on the  
Learning Curve of At-risk and Special  
Education Students**

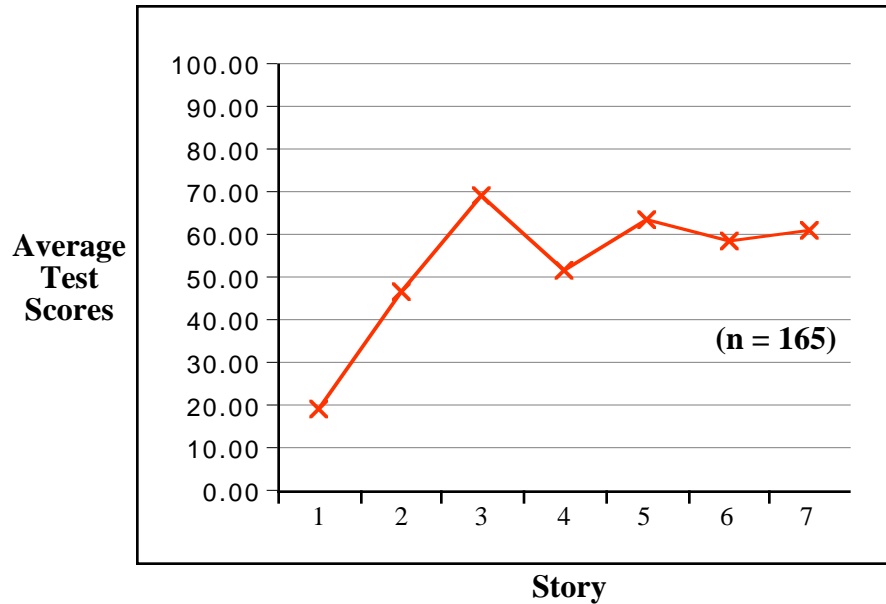
**FAILURE FREE READING – PERFORMANCE MEASURES**  
**Average Test Scores (n =165)**

Criterion Story	Oral Reading		Silent Reading		Word Recognition	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
1 Going to the Park	16.26	88.84	19.59	88.41	14.31	67.60
2 At the Lake	53.50	96.15	47.13	94.00	23.86	85.49
3 Walk in the Woods	72.60	98.19	69.11	97.72	44.19	92.05
4 Eating Lunch	62.47	97.52	52.00	93.68	30.78	87.51
5 Pony Ride	74.17	98.25	63.75	97.03	36.85	84.99
6 Sitting Down	76.53	98.23	58.67	96.76	44.21	87.50
7 Time to Leave	89.80	97.23	61.19	97.01	54.76	92.26

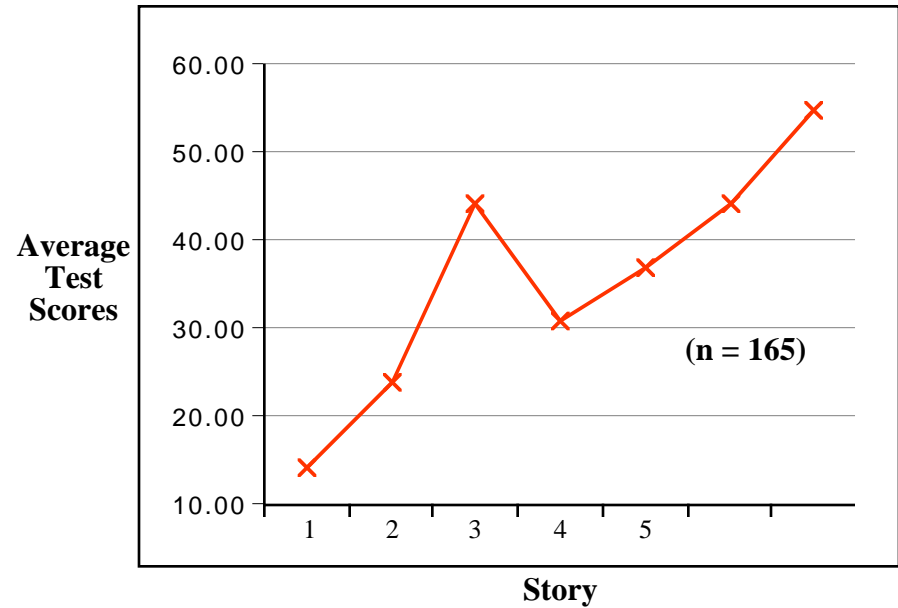
**Oral Reading Pre Test Measures**



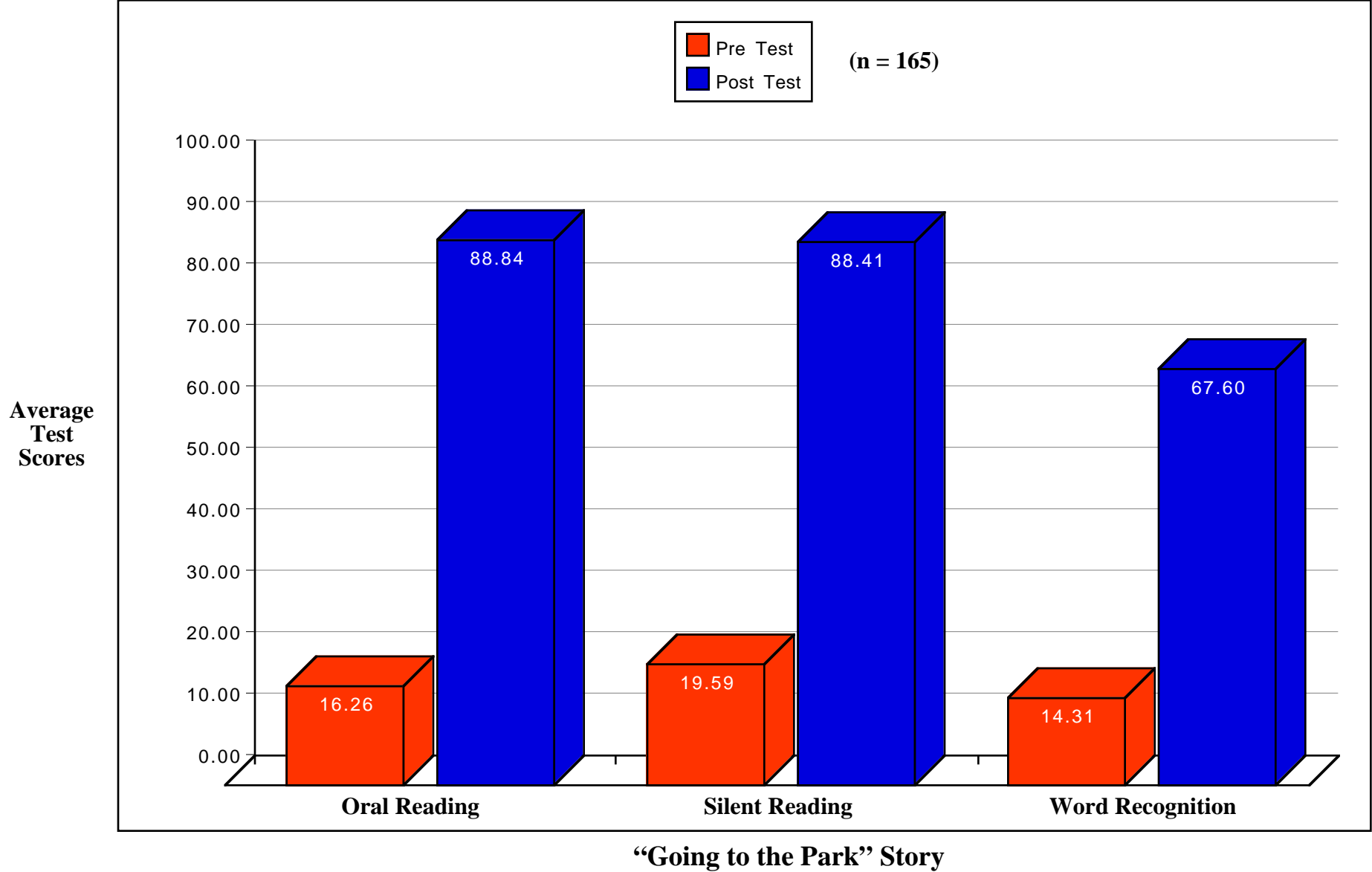
**Silent Reading Pre Test Measures**



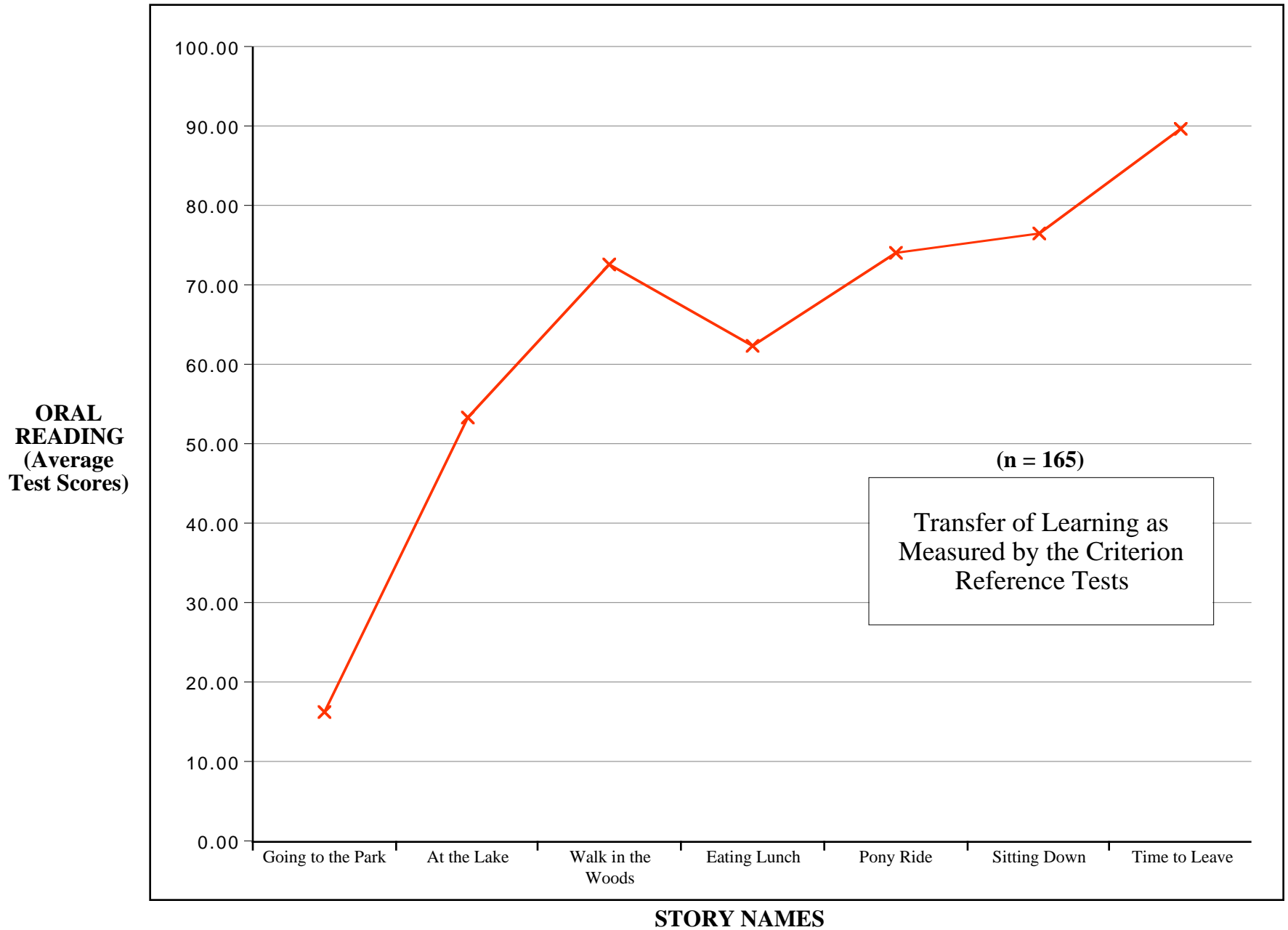
**Word Recognition Pre Test Measures**



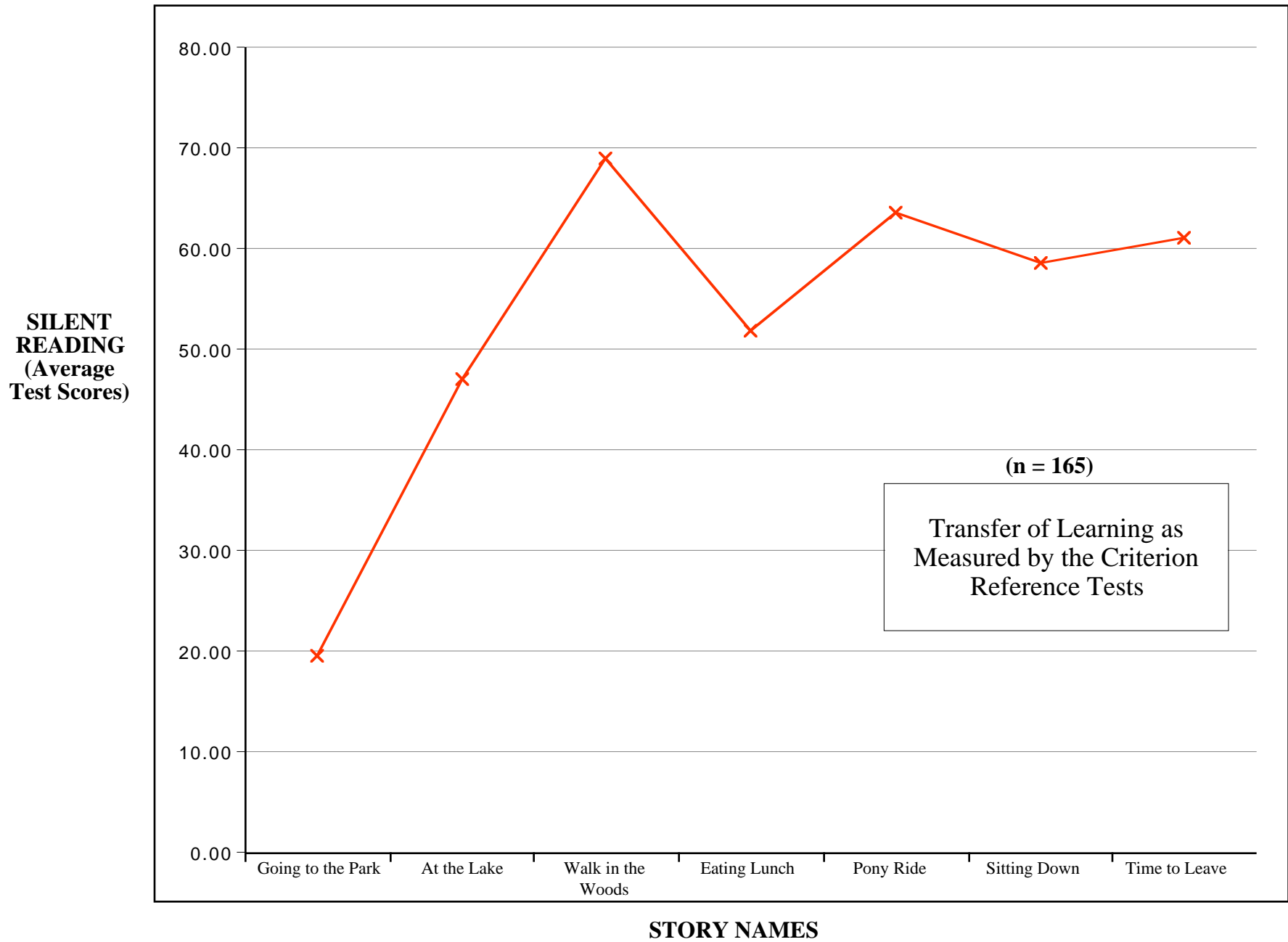
# Failure Free Reading Performance Measures



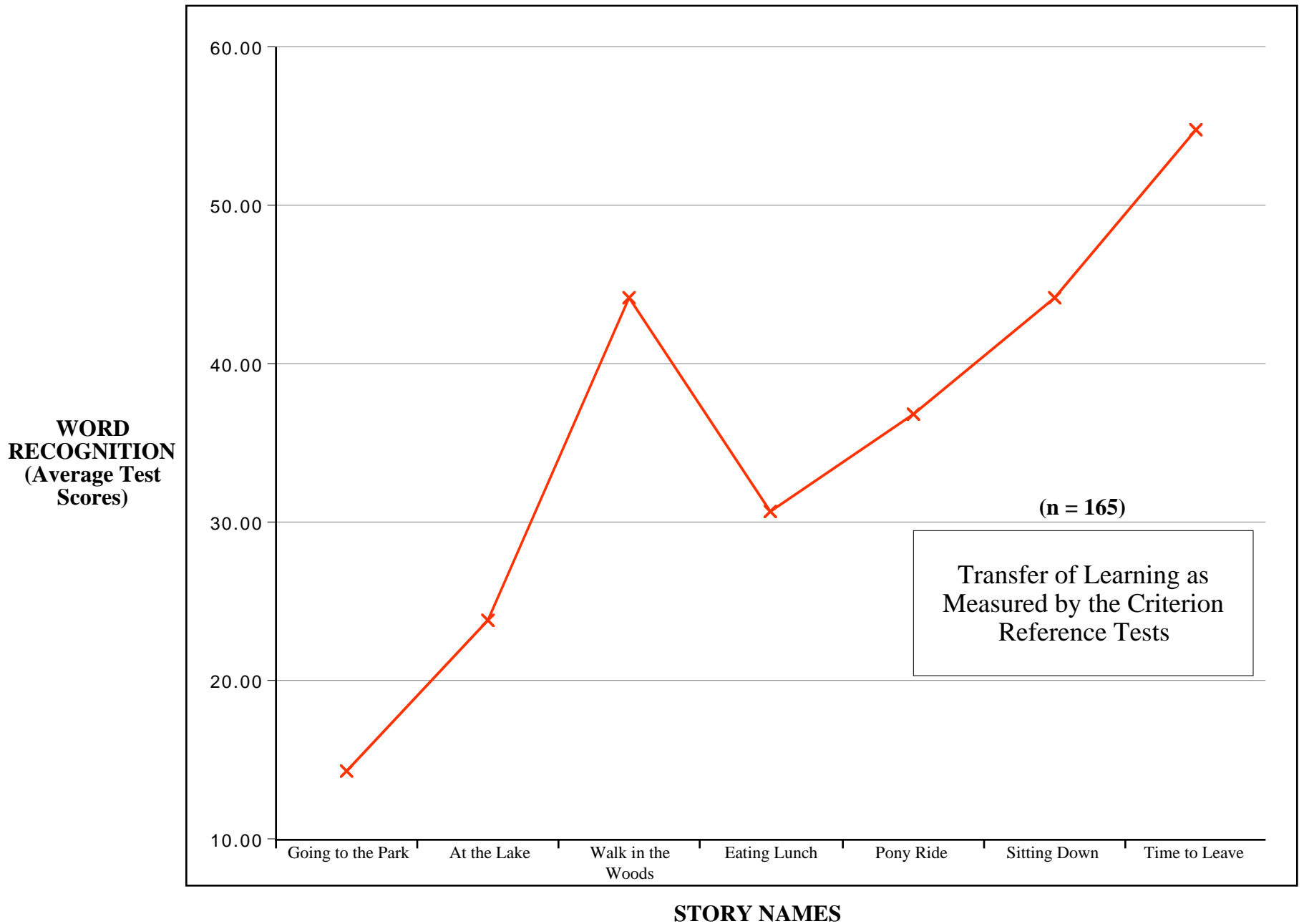
## PRE TEST PERFORMANCE MEASURES



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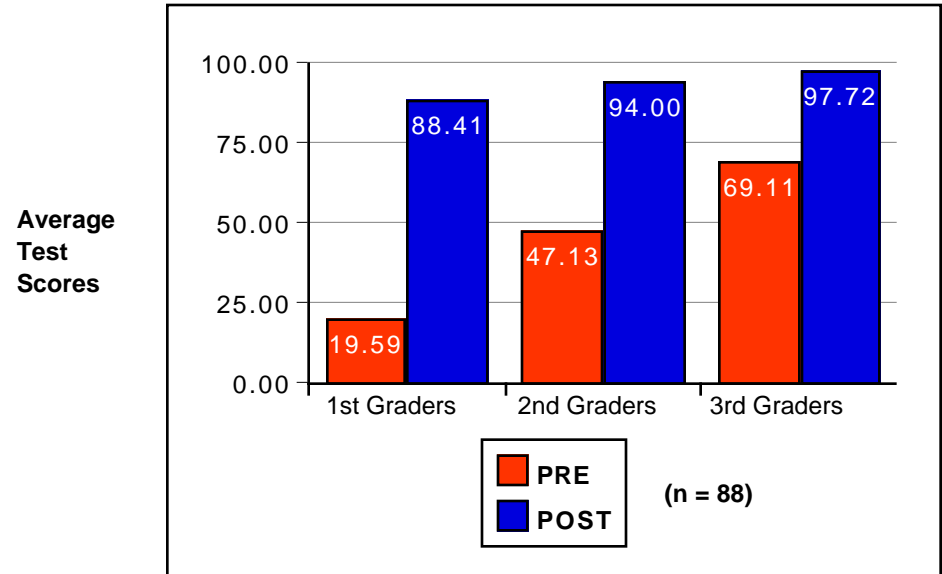


From: Valdosta State University (In Press)

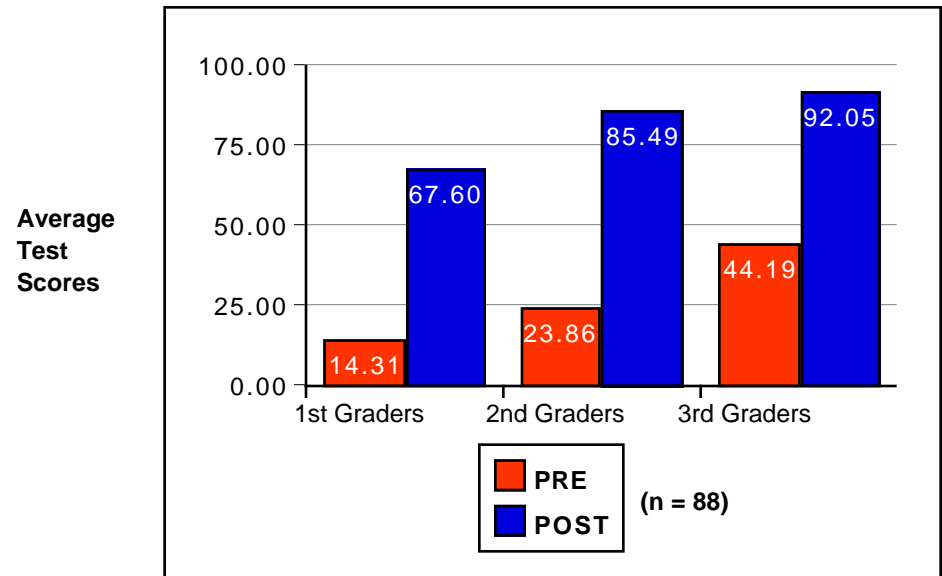
**FAILURE FREE READING - PERFORMANCE MEASURES**  
**Average Test Scores (n = 88)**

Grade Level	Silent Reading		Word Recognition	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
1st Graders	19.59	88.41	14.31	67.60
2nd Graders	47.13	94.00	23.86	85.49
3rd Graders	69.11	97.72	44.19	92.05

**SILENT READING PERFORMANCE MEASURES**



**WORD RECOGNITION PERFORMANCE MEASURES**



**The Transfer of Failure Free Reading Learning  
Outcomes to Standardized Measuring  
Instruments**

From: Rowan County School District

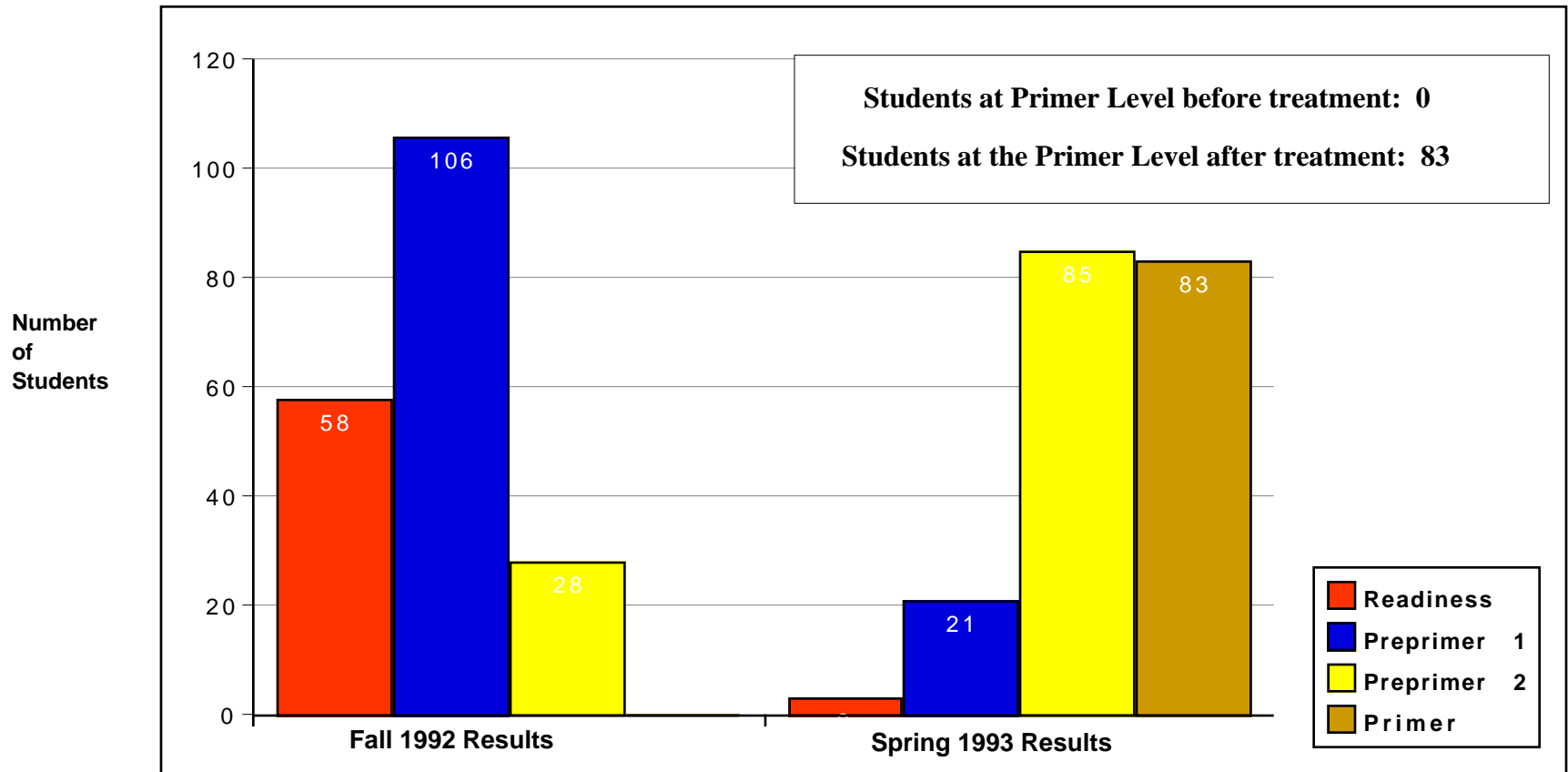
**MAT7 (Metropolitan Achievement Test)**

After 1 year of Failure Free, the At-Risk 1st graders made significant gains.

- 95% decrease** in students at Readiness level
- 80% decrease** in students at Preprimer 1 level
- 200% increase** in students at the Preprimer 2 level

Year	At-Risk 1st Graders			
	Instructional Reading Level			
	Readiness	Preprimer 1	Preprimer 2	Primer
1992	58	106	28	0
1993	3	21	85	83

**Rowan County At-Risk 1st Graders - MAT 7 Scores**



From: Rowan County School District

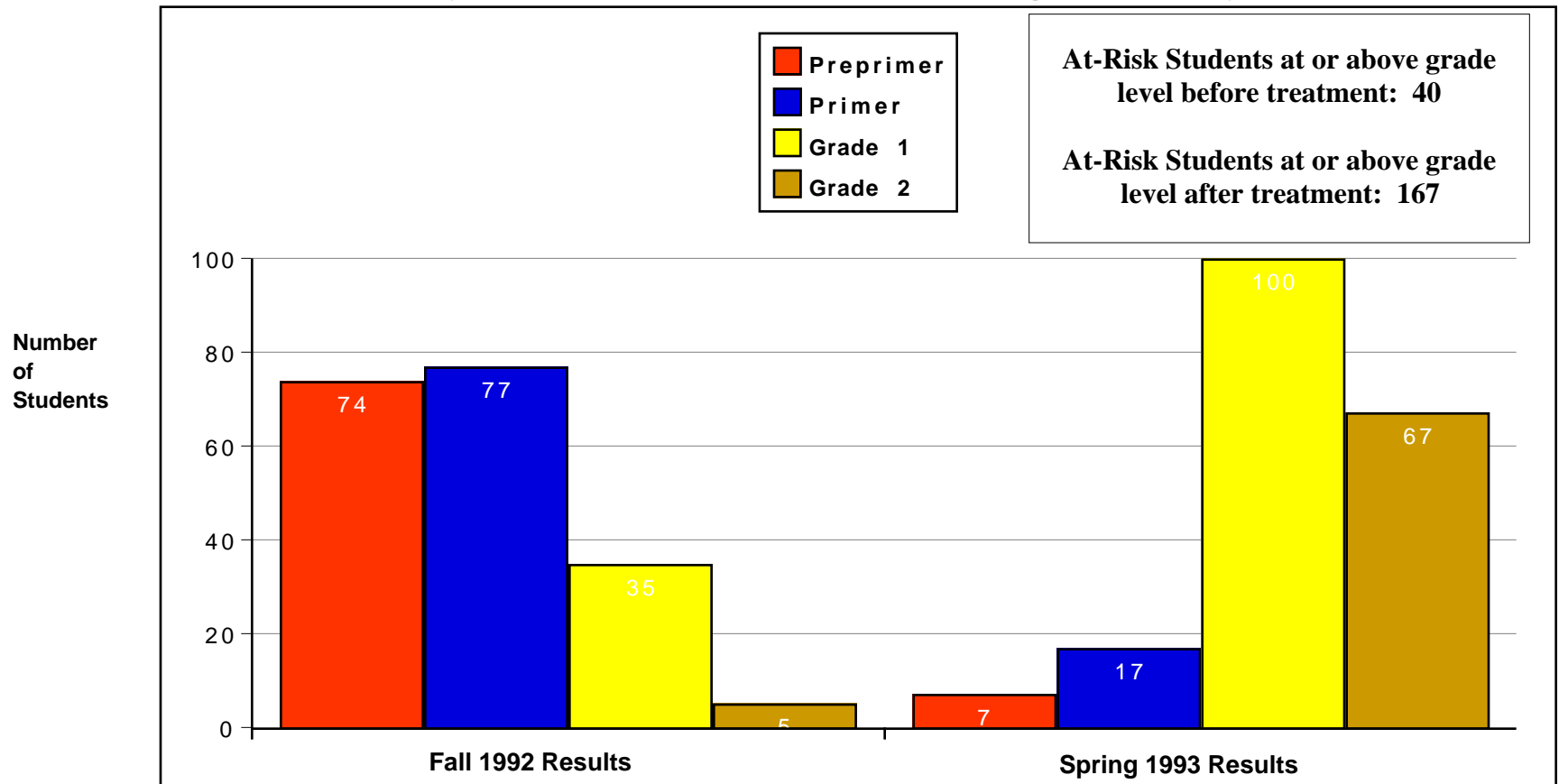
**MAT7 (Metropolitan Achievement Test)**

After 1 year of Failure Free, the At-Risk 1st graders made significant gains.

**91% decrease** in students at Preprimer level  
**78% decrease** in students at Primer level  
**186% increase** in students at the Grade 1 level  
**1240% increase** in students at the Grade 2 level

Year	Number of At-Risk 1st Graders			
	Sight Vocabulary Level			
	Preprimer	Primer	Grade 1	Grade 2
1992	74	77	35	5
1993	7	17	100	67

**Rowan County At-Risk 1st Graders - MAT 7 Scores (Sight Vocabulary)**



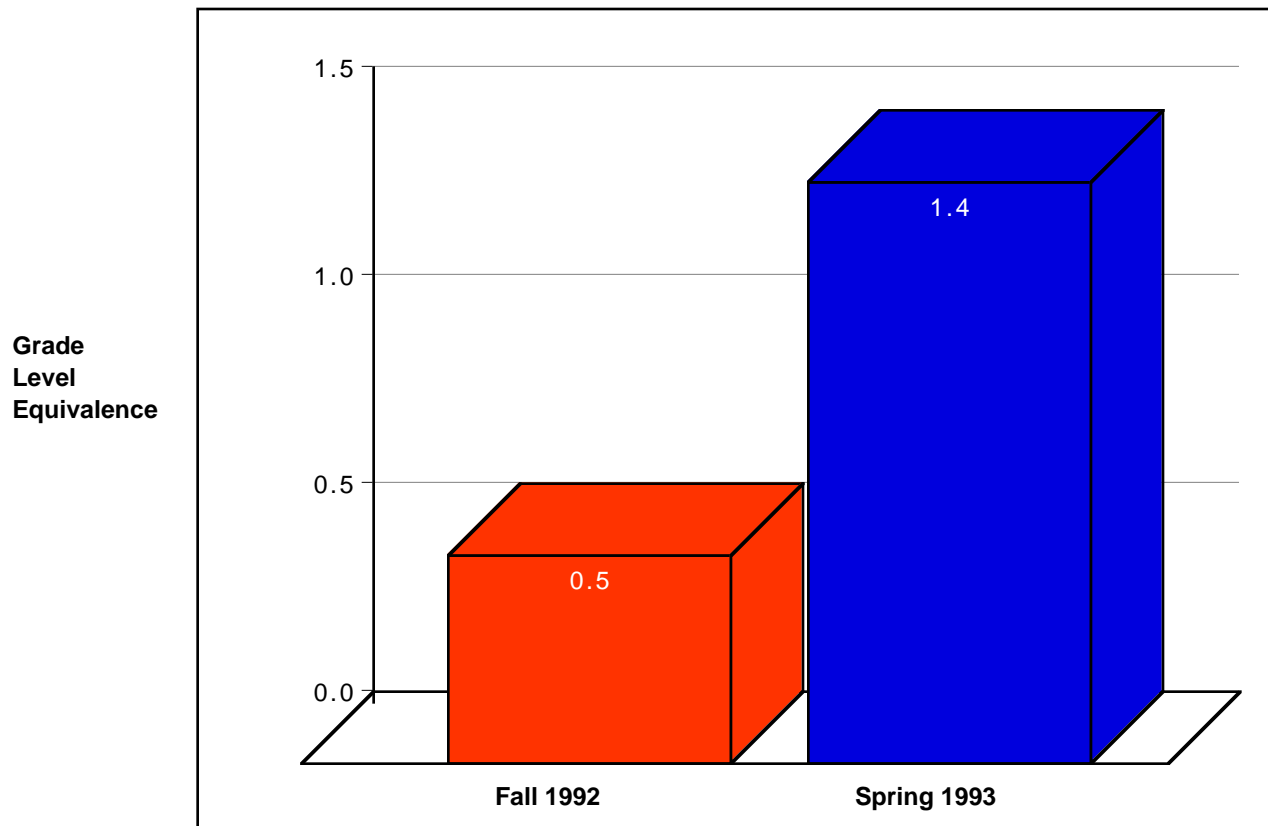
From: Rowan County School District

**MAT7 (Metropolitan Achievement Test)  
Average Grade Level**

Student Group	Average Grade Level	
	Fall 1992	Spring 1993
At-Risk 1st Graders	0.5	1.4

After 1 year of Failure Free, the At-Risk 1st graders made significant gains.  
**9 months growth for 6 months time!**

**Rowan County At-Risk 1st Graders - MAT 7 Grade Level Equivalence Scores**



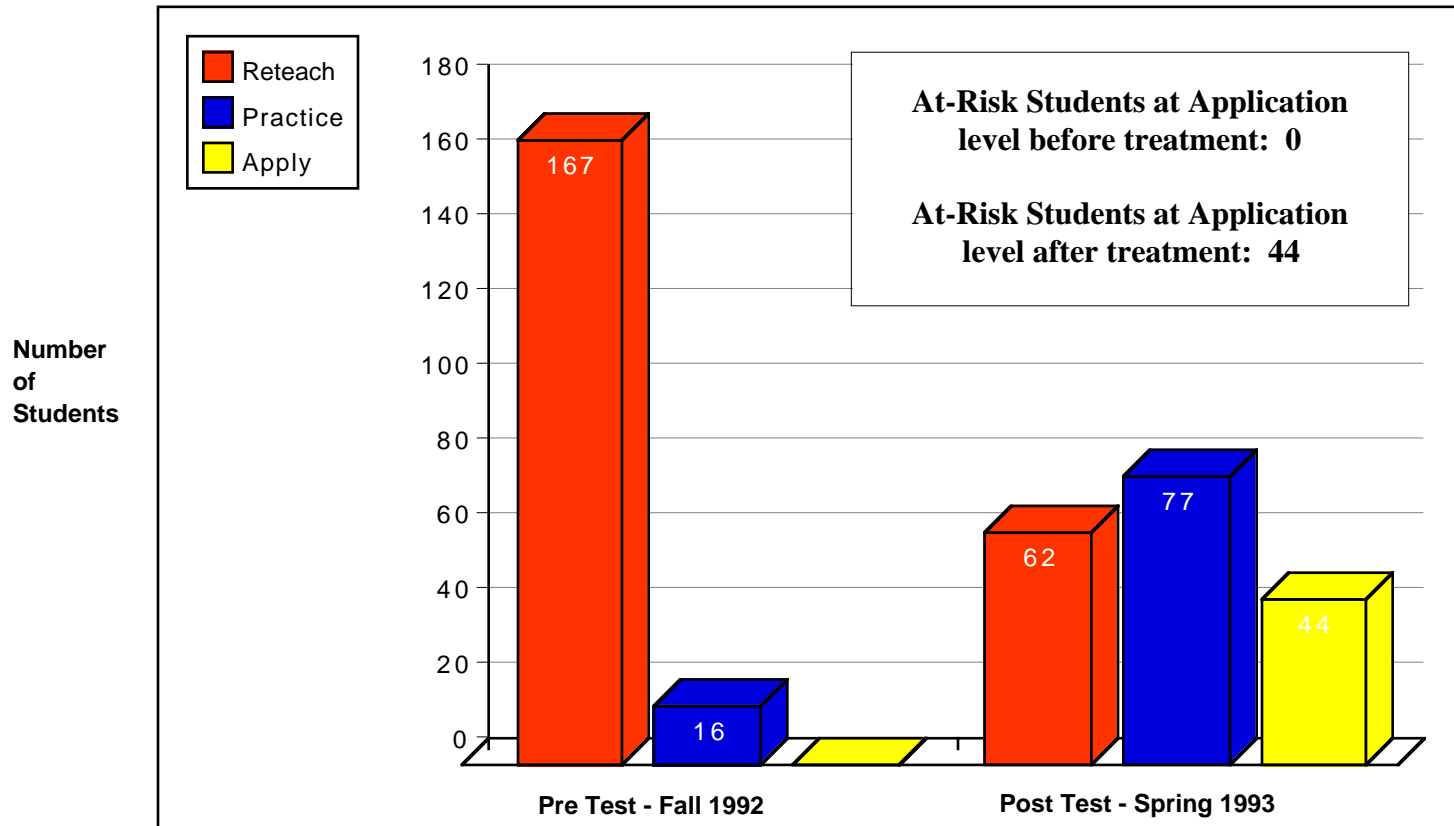
**From: Rowan County School District**

**MAT7 (Metropolitan Achievement Test)  
Growth in Vocabulary in Context**

Numbers of Students			
Year	Reteach	Practice	Apply
1992	167	16	0
1993	62	77	44

After 1 year of Failure Free, the At-Risk 1st graders made significant gains.  
**66% Moved from Frustration Level to an Instructional Level or Higher!**

**Rowan County At-Risk 1st Graders - MAT 7 Vocabulary in Context Levels**



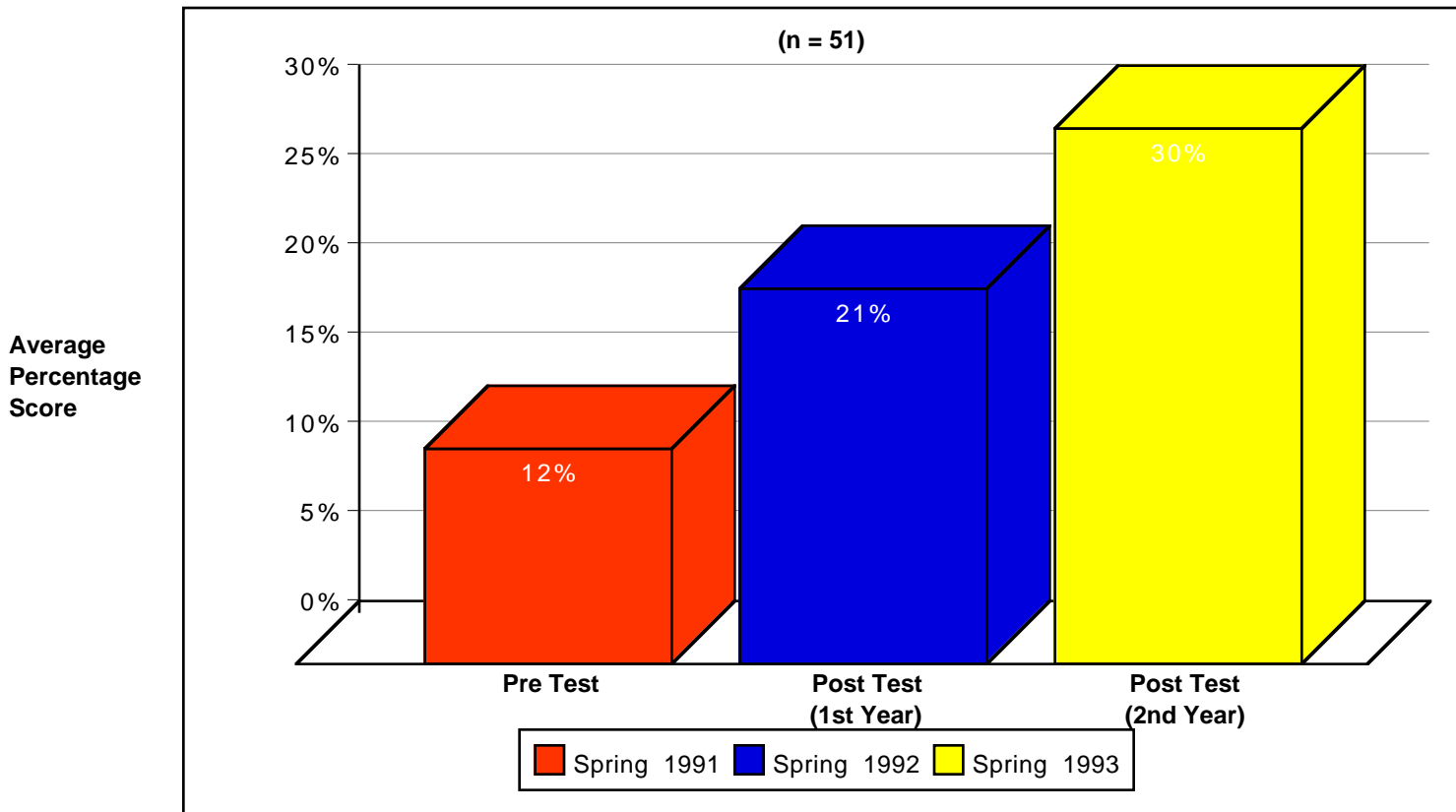
From: Dickerson Elementary School (n = 51)

**Stanford Achievement Test Scores**  
**Average Percentage Score - Reading**

Year	Spring 1991	Spring 1992	Spring 1993
Average %	12%	21%	30%

Students identified as At-Risk Second Graders (n = 51) in Spring of 1991 showed significant and steady Yearly Improvement in National Percentile Ranking during both years that they used Failure Free Reading.

**Dickerson Elementary - Stanford Achievement Reading Test Scores**



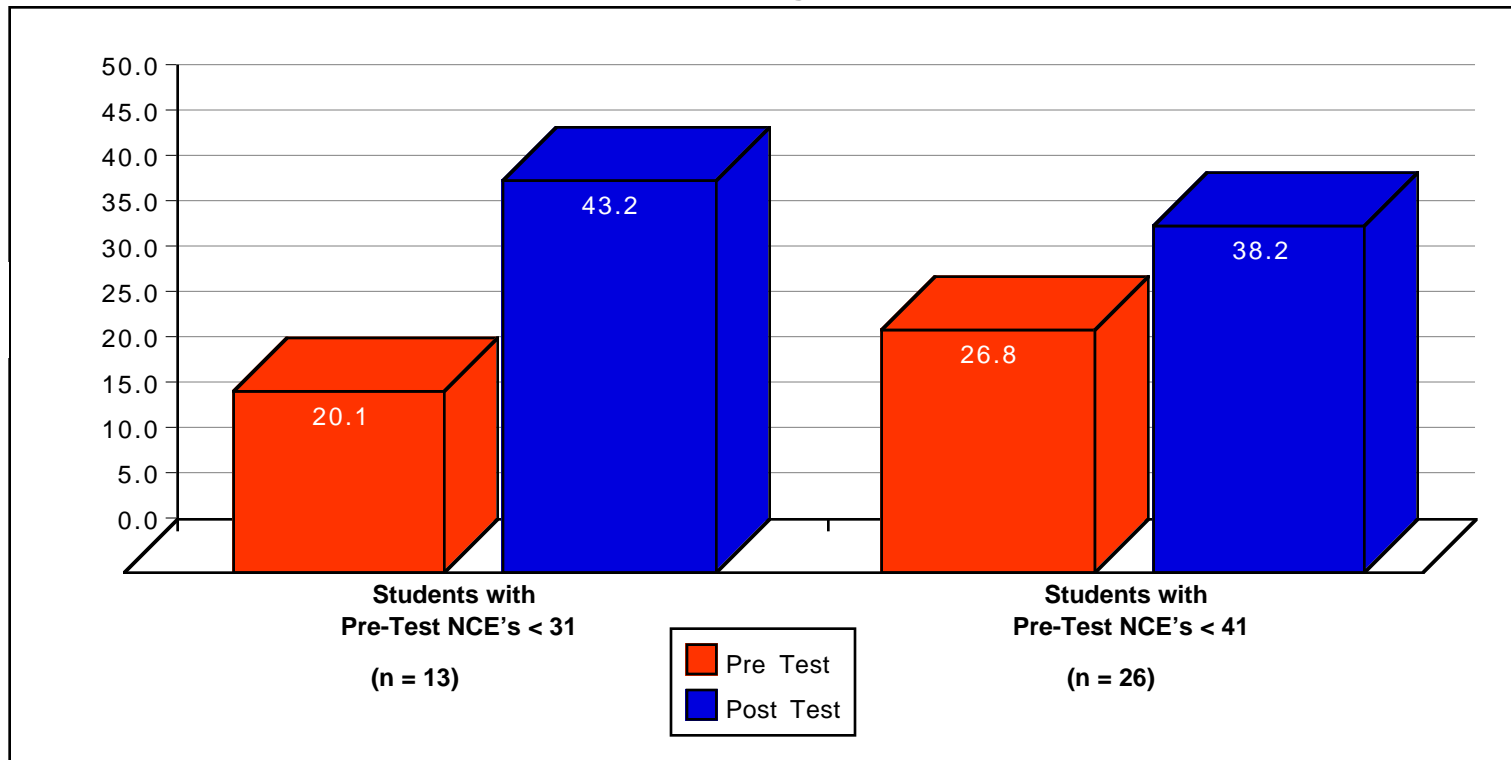
From: Valdosta State University (In-Press)

**Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)  
Average NCE Scores**

Student Group	Average NCE Scores		p-value	Sample
	Pre Test	Post Test		
Students with Pre-Test NCE's < 31	20.1	43.2	p<.003	n = 13
Students with Pre-Test NCE's < 41	26.8	38.2	p<.014	n = 26

**“Children who had the poorest NCE’s at the beginning of the program exhibited average gains of 23.1 points [on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills] by the end of the program.”**

**Iowa Test of Basic Skills - Average NCE Scores**



# **The Sustaining of the Growth Produced by the Failure Free Reading Program**

From: Independent Research, Greenwood, MS

**Stanford Achievement Tests**

**National Percentile Ranking**

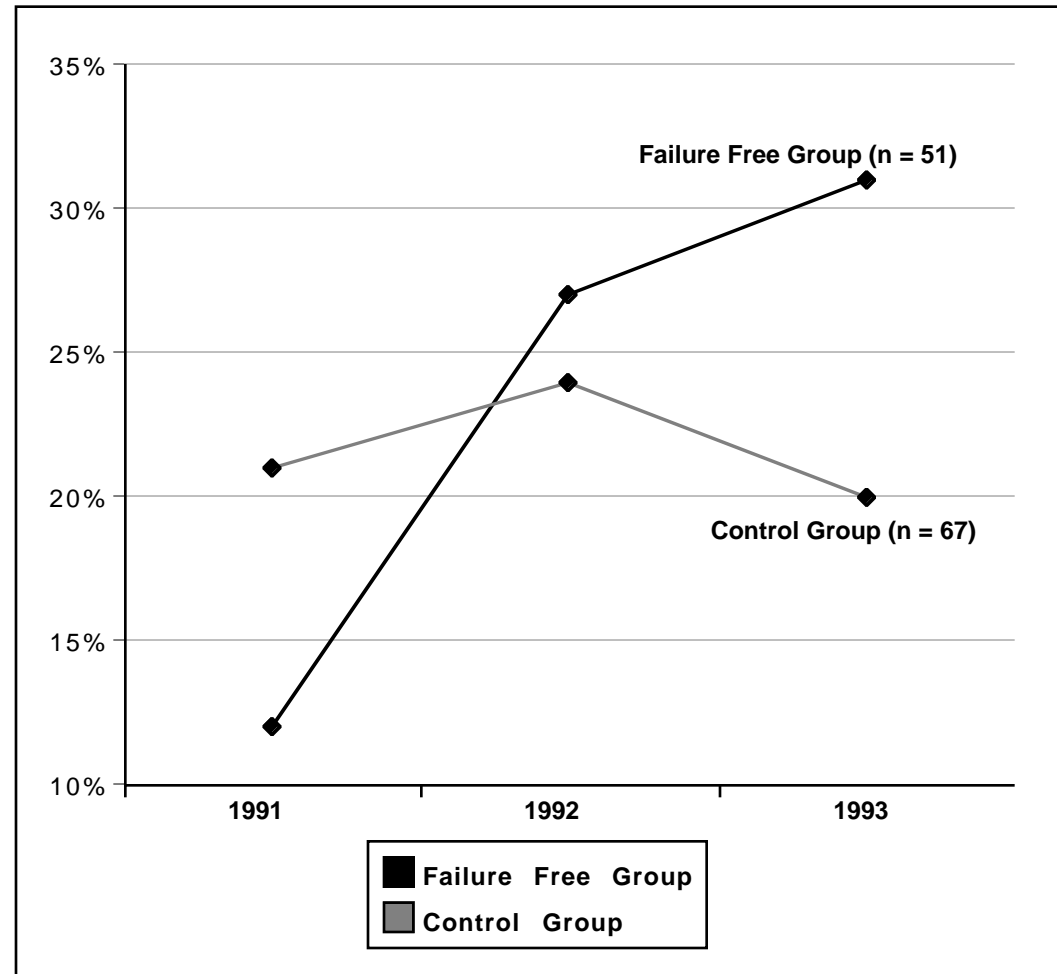
**1st Graders Identified as At-Risk in 1991**

Year	National Percentile Ranking	
	(n = 51) Failure Free Group	(n = 67) Control Group
1991	12%	21%
1992	27%	24%
1993	31%	20%

Average  
National  
Percentile  
Ranking

**The National Percentile Ranking for the Failure Free Treatment Group showed significant and steady gains for 2 years; whereas the Control Group remained relatively unchanged.**

**Stanford Achievement Test  
Average National Percentile Ranking**



**From: Rowan County School District**

**North Carolina End of Grade Tests**

**Group "Level" Rankings**

**Follow-up for Students Successfully Discontinued**

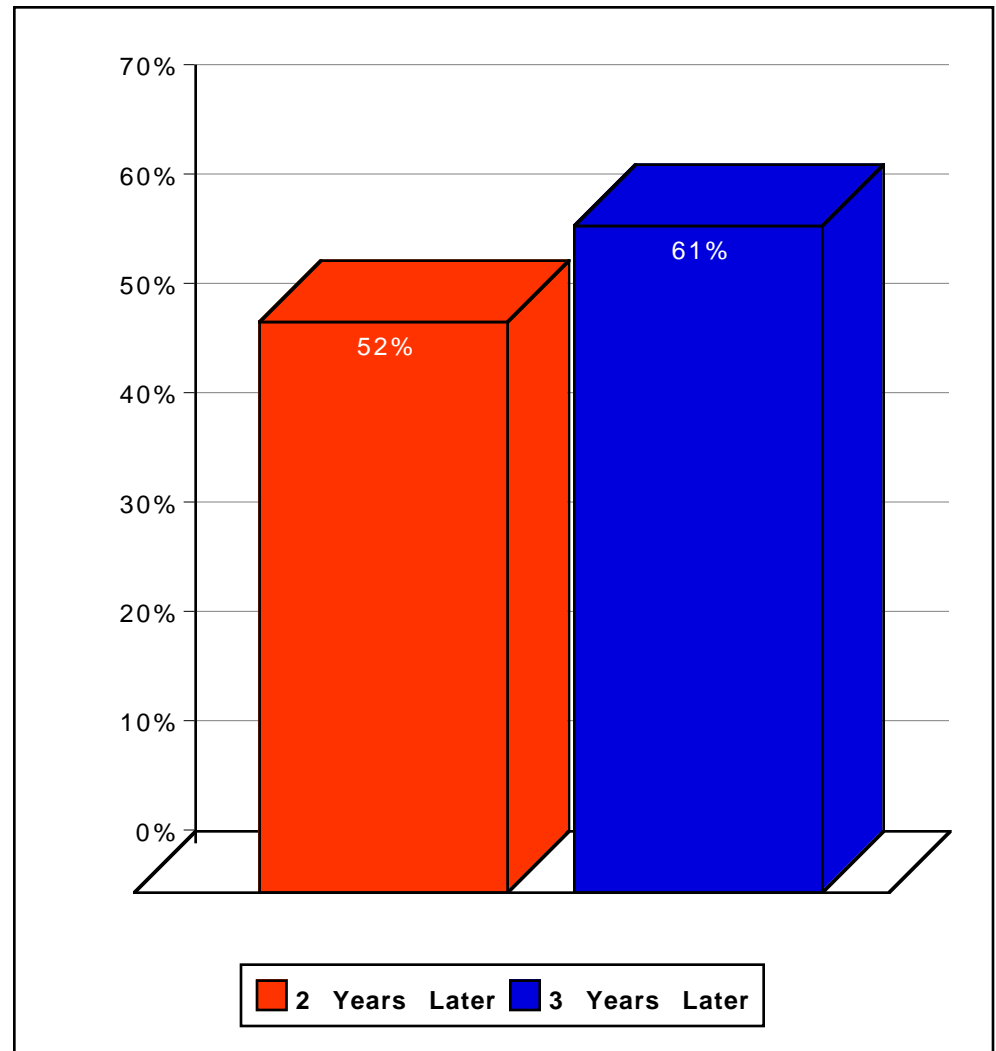
Percentile	Total Group (n = 46)	
	% of Students	
	2 Years Later	3 Years Later
41st - 74th	52%	61%

**% of Students testing at the 41st - 74th Percentile**

**The successful results were maintained and even increased 2 and 3 years after treatment.**

**The number of students testing at the 41st - 74th % ranking increased even 2 - 3 years after these students were successfully discontinued from the Failure Free program.**

**North Carolina End of Grade Test  
Group Level Ranking - Number of Level III Students**



**The Accelerated Growth Curve Associated  
with Failure Free Reading**

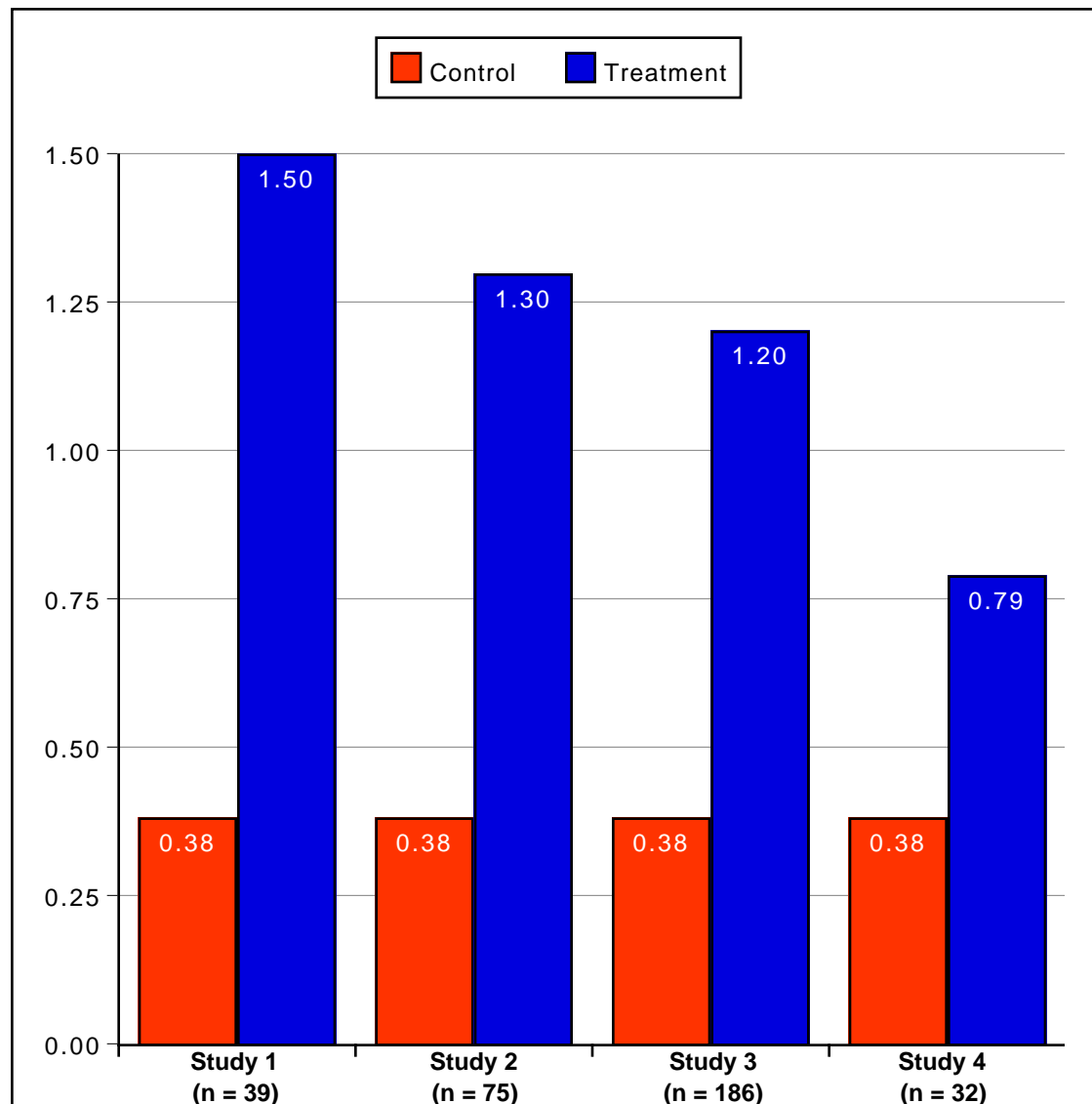
**Reading Comprehension  
Grade Level Equivalent Scores**

Study	Grade Level Equivalent Scores		
	Pre	Post	Gain
Study 1 (94/95) n = 39	2.00	3.50	1.50
Study 2 (95/96) n = 75	2.30	3.60	1.30
Study 3 (96/97) n = 186	1.80	3.00	1.20
Study 4 (96/97) n = 32	2.13	2.92	0.79
Control (96/97) n = 10	3.51	3.89	0.38

Grade  
Level  
Equivalent  
Scores

The growth effects from the original study are holding over a long period of time; and the growth effects are 2 to 4 times higher than the results seen in a Control Group who had access to virtually any other tool, resource, or product available to Special Education.

**Woodcock Johnson  
Reading Comprehension Subtest**

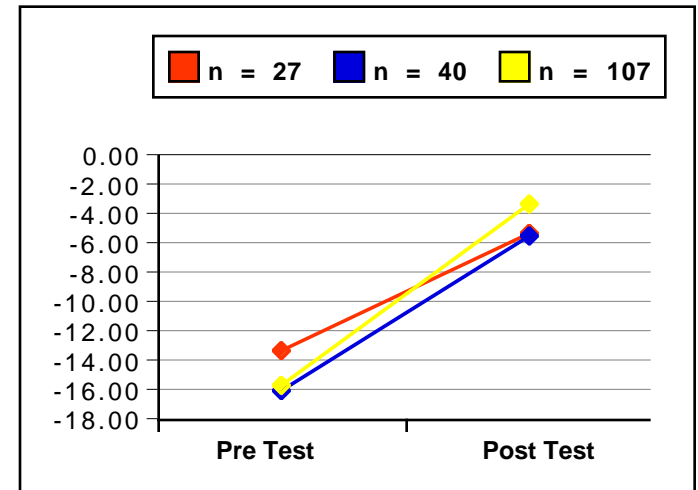


From: Independent Research (Klein I.S.D.)

**Woodcock/Johnson Reading Comprehension Subtest  
Discrepancy Between Scaled Scores and IQ Scores**

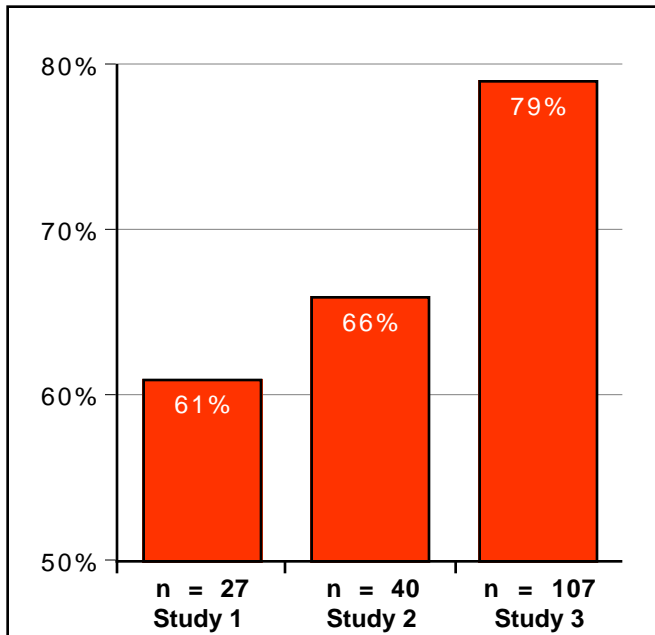
Category	Average Discrepancies		
	Study 1 (95/96)	Study 2 (95/96)	Study 3 (96/97)
	n = 27	n = 40	n = 107
Pre Test	-13.30	-16.02	-15.68
Post Test	-5.20	-5.45	-3.31
% Decrease	61%	66%	79%
% Students w/ no Discrepancy after Post Test	30%	45%	43%

**Woodcock Johnson  
Reading Comprehension Subtest**



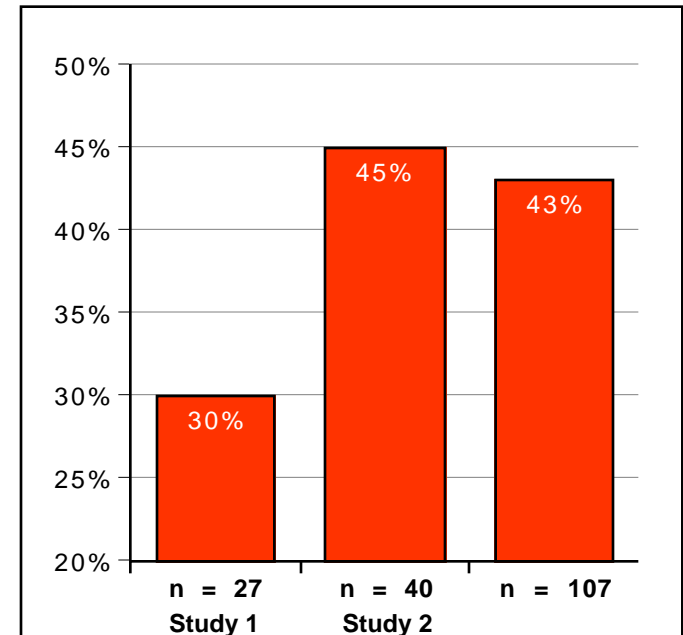
**Woodcock Johnson  
Reading Comprehension Subtest**

% Decrease in  
Discrepancy  
from Pre to  
Post Test



**Woodcock Johnson  
Reading Comprehension Subtest**

% of  
Students to  
Completely  
Eliminate  
Discrepancy



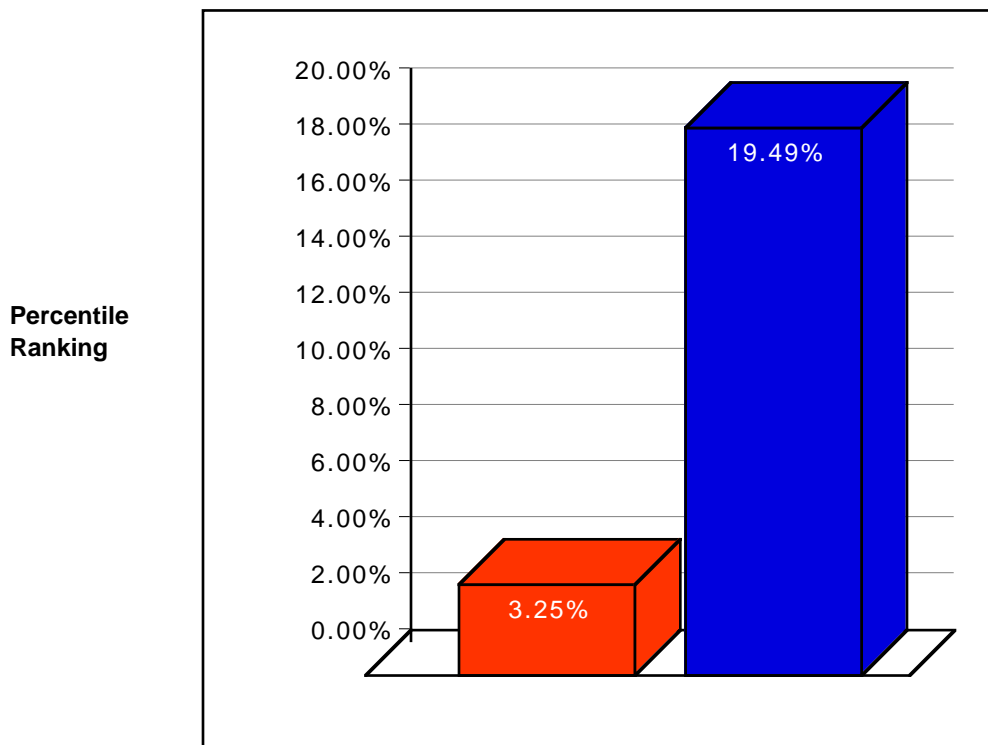
From: Independent Research (Klein I.S.D.)

**Woodcock/Johnson Reading Comprehension Subtest  
National Percentage Equivalence Scores for Students who Pre Tested Below 10%**

Category	Percentage Score	
	Pre	Post
Average	3.25%	19.49%
Stand. Dev.	2.78%	18.90%

	Number of Students
Students who lost % from Pre to Post	8%
Students with no growth from Pre to Post	8%
Students who gained % from Pre to Post	84%

**Woodcock Johnson  
Reading Comprehension Subtest**



**Students in the Bottom 10%  
(on Pre Test) showed  
significant growth.**

**In fact, 84% of the  
students gained in  
Reading Comprehension  
Percentage Score from  
Pre Test to Post Test.**

From: Independent Research (Klein I.S.D.)

Woodcock/Johnson Reading Comprehension Subtest  
National Percentage Equivalence Scores  
for Students who Pre Tested Below 21%

**31% of the students who  
Pre Tested Below the  
21st percentile, tested at  
the 50th percentile  
or higher after 2 years of  
Failure Free Reading  
treatment.**

Category	Percentage Score		
	Pre Test	1st Year Post Test	2nd Year Post Test
Average % Score	9.69%	20.88%	31.50%

Woodcock Johnson  
Reading Comprehension Subtest

