

## Assessment Tools

Reading and math intervention programs are a big investment. Five administrators give you the lowdown on what's worth buying.



**NAME:** Kim Kruger, director of secondary education  
**SCHOOL:** Moreno Valley (CA) Unified District  
**WHAT THEY USE:** Scholastic READ 180 ([www.scholastic.com/read180](http://www.scholastic.com/read180))

**The problem:** “We decided to try READ 180 in our high schools because many of our students were reading below grade level. At first we focused on ESL and special ed students. When we started getting a lot of good reports after the first year, we decided to expand it to our middle schools and elementary schools.”

**The results:** “Most students really took to the program. They move from computers to small groups to independent reading, so there’s no time to get bored. **Some of our lowest-level readers really blossomed.**”

**Any surprises?** “Because it’s a 90-minute program, and we run on traditional 57-minute periods, we had to allocate special classrooms for a double-block. But the nice part of combining the two periods is that we have extra time to add core English and language arts requirements along with the intervention so the kids can stay connected with classroom work.”

**“We did have to purchase more computers to run the program, which we did on a site-to-site basis. Once we had tech and facilities in place, we needed to look at training. We now train all READ 180 teachers and even have hired two dedicated READ 180 specialists to deal with tech issues and in-service training.”**

**Next challenge?** “Our big concern is that kids in READ 180 miss 9th- or 10th-grade English. We want them to be ready for 11th-grade English, so we have developed strategic intervention classes to bridge that gap. Frankly, our goal is to see these intervention classes go away. By intervening in elementary and middle school, we want to see fewer high school kids needing the program.”

**The problem:** “We didn’t have an appropriate tool for universal screening. Under RTI, this is one of the absolutes, but we—like many other districts—did not really have a good tool.”

**The solution:** “In most cases, assessments are used for placement into a specific program or are limited in scope.

**DORA gives us information in as many as seven subsets, engages students (even the reluctant ones) so that we get accurate information, and does not require teacher time.**

Both DORA and DOMA allow us to look at *all* students so we can place them appropriately.

“We created a matrix for placement in programs offered by our district, and, as a bonus, the sites can use the information to look for weak areas in all students.”

**Reaction?** “We were surprised by the positive response from students. Even the reluctant ones were asking to finish. I was also pleased to see the interest of both our psychologists and teachers.”

“Because of DORA, this is the first year that our entering freshmen are appropriately placed into reading intervention classes. This should be as basic as bread.”



**NAME:** Sewellyn Kaplan, secondary literacy coach  
**SCHOOL:** West Contra Costa (CA) Unified School District  
**WHAT THEY USE:** Diagnostic Online Reading Assessments (DORA) and Diagnostic Online Math Assessments (DOMA) ([www.curriculumassociates.com](http://www.curriculumassociates.com))

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BY CHRISTINE WEISER