

Case Study

Alliance Middle School, Ohio Special Education Uses *DORA*

"DORA has been great for helping us diagnose, assess, and guide reading instruction for our special education students. I love being able to see patterns in student performance over time. I can get a glimpse of my students' performances immediately. I can assess an entire class in 45 minutes and quickly identify each student's needs."

- Laura Keheller, Special Education Teacher

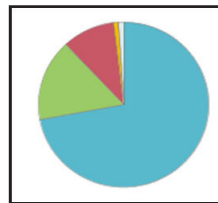
At a Glance...	
Product Used	<i>DORA</i>
School	<i>Alliance Middle Sch.</i>
Time Period	<i>One Semester</i>
Deployment Type	<i>Special Education Reading</i>
Benefits	- Easy administration - Detailed reporting - Ongoing measurement of progress
Results	- Measured growth in reading subskills

Customer Profile:

Alliance Middle School is part of the Alliance City School District in Alliance, Ohio. 68% of the students attending Alliance Middle School are classified as economically disadvantaged compared to the state average of 36%. In addition, the ethnic diversity of the school is greater than the state average. (See the table to the right). Another challenge for Alliance is that they have over 100 students with special needs—more than 18% of the student body.

Ethnicity	This District	State Average
White	72%	78%
Black	16%	15%
Multiracial	10%	3%
Hispanic	1%	3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	<1%	1%

Source: OH Dept. of Education, 2007-2008

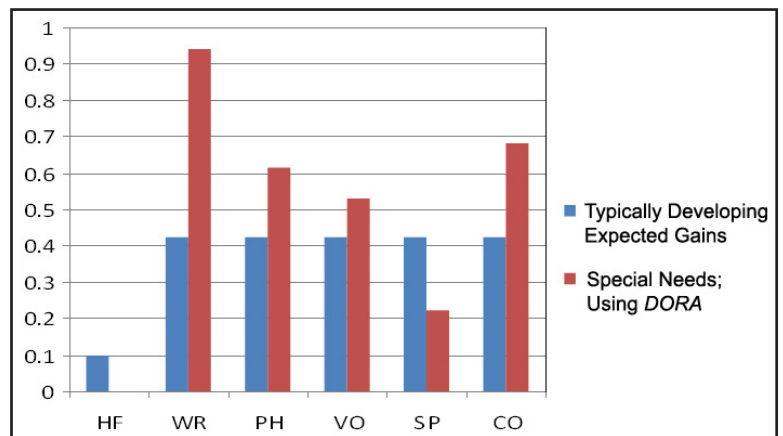


Study Methodology and Data:

Teachers at Alliance Middle School are using *DORA* to help students share responsibility for their own learning and plan their own process of improvement. In the past, *DORA* reports were used exclusively by teachers to set reading goals for their students. Now the students themselves are also using *DORA* reports and are actively participating with teachers to set their own goals. Students identify their top three improvement priorities for the semester. Students also set their end-of-the-year goals for comprehension. Assessments are performed three times during the year, at the beginning and end of the first semester and again at the end of the school year. The *DORA* standards reports are used by teachers and other school personnel to develop and update student IEPs. Teachers can easily see which state standards each student needs to address. By pointing out commonalities across student profiles, broader areas of emphasis can be identified for regular classroom instruction, and for the school as a whole, to help improve the reading ability of every student who participates in *DORA*.

Results:*

There were outstanding gains on the following *DORA* sub-tests: Word Recognition, Phonics, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. On four out of seven sub-tests in *DORA*, the improvement for the special needs students exceed the expected progress for typically developing students. The special needs students did not show gains that met or exceeded the level expected for typically developing students on the High Frequency Words sub-test or the Spelling sub-test. The progress of the special needs students strongly suggests that this often underserved population has the potential to make significant advances in skills supporting reading ability when teachers are given the tools they need and students are given the guidance and opportunities they need.



X-axis: *DORA* Subskills, HF=High-Frequency Words, WR=Word Recognition, PH=Phonics, VO=Vocabulary, SP=Spelling, CO=Comprehension. Y-axis: Years of Gain
Note: HF "expected gains" were 0.1 because for this sample of students, 3/4 had already mastered all high-frequency words.

Conclusions:*

At Alliance Middle School, *DORA* has clearly helped both teachers and students set and meet important goals for improving reading skills. Allowing students to see a legitimate report of their current abilities and their progress reinforces their own striving for success. When the students can see their hard work paying off by the improvement in their reading skills, as demonstrated in *DORA*, it naturally leads to the students setting higher goals for themselves.

* Data Analysis performed by Stephen Moore, Associate Director, Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment Research Center, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley.