

Astatula: Stories from Our SIPPS Journey

By Gina Fugnitto | Categories: Reading Intervention and Acceleration

Astatula Elementary School is in their second year of implementation of the SIPPS program. They selected SIPPS to support their most struggling readers in 1st through 5th grade during their intervention block.

The Astatula teachers that provide the SIPPS instruction share some of their "implementation stories"...

I teach SIPPS Challenge in the 3rd grade, and this is my second year teaching the program. I love the growth that my students show throughout the program. The students start out struggling with short vowel sounds and progress to recognizing irregular sounds in complex words. The students love the sight syllable cards, and are able to pick them out of the words in the lessons. I see them building confidence in reading and recognizing irregular sight words. The students stay engaged and comfortable with the lessons due to the routines.

Dawn Elliott, 3rd Grade Teacher

Dawn adds some additional thoughts about supporting students' intrinsic motivation...

During a recent SIPPS Professional Development, I heard concerns of other teachers regarding motivating the students for SIPPS. In my group, I do not change the routines to motivate my students. I make the skills and the learning my motivation for the kids. For example, if they stay on pace with the lesson, we get to use the dry-erase boards for guided spelling. Also, I let the students know that the sight syllable and irregular sight word cards go in the box when they have mastered them. The students get excited and motivated to learn the cards to have them put away in the box. The motivation for student engagement is built into the lesson structure, and not an added piece of entertainment to the lesson. I let the learning and the program features be the motivation for the students. So far I have had success with this line of thinking!

Dawn Elliott, 3rd Grade Teacher

I got to teach an Extension lesson in Mrs. Miller's intervention group while she observed a Challenge group. The students were so engaged and utilized the sight word dictionaries when working with the guided spelling portion of the lesson. The sound cards also were a great support for the few students who needed help remembering which "ew" sound to use when spelling their words ("oo" "ew" "u_e"). I simply pointed to the card and told them which "number" the correct spelling was. They lit up when they figured out how to spell the word correctly. I was so impressed that they knew which routine to use with each section...and they were happy to "remind" me which part of the lesson came next!

Marni Kay, Reading Coach

As my school's Reading Resource teacher, I'm currently teaching two different SIPPS classes and soon will be expanding to do a Challenge group. This will be a real "challenge" to me but it is also very exciting! I now will have the privilege of seeing how the whole program builds good readers. In my SIPPS Plus group earlier this year, one student told me that they really liked the stories that went along with the earlier lessons because they could read them very easily and they are not "baby" stories. It was nice to hear others comment in agreement. I'm constantly impressed by the good group behavior because no one really has any time for nonsense. We have a minute or two of "talk time" at the beginning and end of class but in between it is focus on SIPPS.

Barbara Pickren, Reading Resource Teacher

With the research based and approved SIPPS PLUS program, a more differentiated instructional approach to teach reading has proven to be invaluable when working with students with learning disabilities. In order for the acquisition of new knowledge to be achieved, my students must learn to apply learning strategies in reading more effectively. With this systematic and organized program, students see day to day what is working and what needs changing. It also helps them change direction, and steer their learning more wisely, while I utilize an evaluation method that indicates whether or not they have met their reading goals.

Focusing on the percentage of students in the lowest quartile, I have utilized the SIPPS program to reduce the number of students who scored remedial and below-average levels as indicated on the 2011 Florida reading assessments. My objective has been for fifth-grade students to show reading gains with an expectancy of no less than 80% of the students attaining this goal by the end of the 2011-2012 school year. Last year I used the SIPPS program and the Florida testing data from the 2010-2011 school year reflects student gains increased by 18.3% with the average at the beginning of the year being 35.2 and the end-of-the-year testing reflecting an average of 53.5. Utilizing the SIPPS program to implement effective learning strategies in reading, fifth-grade students must stay focused on learning and this wonderful program has provided them the proper organizational tools to assist them with this task. I have no doubt that after being exposed to the strategies provided in the SIPPS program, I will see all of my special-needs students become more proficient and make annual yearly progress.

Cathy Kearns, SLD Teacher

My thoughts about SIPPS: It is so exciting to see the students smile as they learn new things. Sometimes I am not sure they get it, but then I do a Mastery test and they know it. I have found that I have to move very fast in order to keep them focused on the topic at hand. I have seen incredible results with SIPPS and love it! As the group finishes the last lessons in Extension: After two-and-a-half weeks off, they all passed the phonics part of the mastery test with flying colors...retaining information!!!!

Judy Miller, 3rd Grade Teacher

Since using SIPPS I have seen my students progress with their phonics skills. They are able to connect what they learn in the lessons to their everyday reading lessons. The program is repetitive with the

lessons so the students know what to expect. Prior to placement testing for SIPPS...there were 18 kids who read at a 1st grade passage or below on the state Fall assessment. After participating in the SIPPS Extension program (9 students started the program at lesson P1 and the other 9 entered at lesson 1) for three-and-a-half months...15 of the 18 students are now reading at a 2.1 level passage or higher on the state assessment.

Andrea Bonvento, 2nd Grade Teacher