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Study Island: Explored, Tried, and Tested

Submitted to the Faculty of Urbana University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

College of Education and Allied Professions

Department of Graduate Study

By

Heather Brandt

Urbana University

Urbana, Ohio

2007

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Advisor: *W. Newland*



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Statement of the Problem

State achievement tests are the determining factor as to schools passing levies, schools performing well on their Annual Yearly Progress report (AYP), and districts showing excellent ratings on their report cards every year. Schools are teaching towards the goal of all students passing and improving performance on state achievement tests. Because of such a narrow focus on state standards and the questions historically asked on these assessments, test preparation has become a part of every teacher's daily regime and is big business. Test preparation comes in many forms: workbooks, textbooks, after school interventions, and computerized programs. Study Island is a computerized program that employs practice tests, games, and tutorials based on state standards to prepare students for achievement tests. A subscription to access the website is costly, and although there are a lot of testimonials promoting the success of the program, there are no references or refereed research verifying the results on state achievement tests after using the Study Island program. The purpose of this study was to describe and determine if there was a significant difference in junior high reading achievement test scores after having used the Study Island program.

Significance of the Study

The use of Study Island cost the selected junior high \$5,001.60 (McCord, 2006). Using such a costly program warrants further investigation into a product that is used to prepare for high stakes assessments such as the seventh and eighth grade reading achievement tests. Students used the Study Island web based program as a supplemental instructional activity in reading classes and during study halls on a consistent basis. Is this time worth the money paid for the program, and deemed adequate and worthy instruction?

According to the Department of Education (2003) each state shall implement a system that will hold its schools accountable for making adequate yearly progress (AYP). This accountability system entails growth each year in student performance, participation, and progress over time (Dept. of Ed., 2003). In order to make AYP's, school districts like the selected junior high, are choosing to be creative in their instructional efforts as a way to engage students in the rigors of achievement testing preparation. Testimonials on the Study Island web site attest to it being successful in student's raising their achievement test scores. This study was significant in testing junior high reading students' progress on reading achievement tests after having used the Study Island program.

Research Questions

1. What are junior high school teachers' perceptions on using Study Island to prepare for reading achievement tests?
2. What are junior high school students' perceptions on using Study Island to prepare for reading achievement tests?
3. Is there a significant difference in achievement on junior high reading achievement test scores between the same group of students who did not use Study Island during their seventh grade year and did use Study Island their eighth grade year?

Definitions

1. Accelerated Reader – a reading program awarding points to students who take comprehension tests after reading books on their reading grade level. The program has a vocabulary test that measures student’s reading level before they attempt to read a book and take the comprehension test for points.
2. Junior High Students – students at the seventh and eighth grade levels who are between the ages of 12 and 15.
3. Reading Achievement Tests – tests that are taken at the end of the school year to assess students’ knowledge of the state standards in reading and are used to determine progress on a school district’s AYP.
4. Real Time – immediate data feedback; enables educators to see trends in performance on assessments giving them the ability to adapt the learning environment in order to make it more effective (Study Island, 2006)
5. Study Island – a web-based assessment, instruction, and diagnostic program designed to assist students and teachers in their effort to attain student mastery of the state standards (Study Island, 2006)

Procedures of the Study

The research was conducted in the spring of 2007 at a selected junior high school in west-central Ohio and used existing and current data collected from a convenience sample of eighth graders. The sample had passed their seventh grade year and was enrolled as eighth graders at the time of the study. When preparing for the seventh grade reading achievement test, the eighth graders used workbooks and other paper/pencil activities as a part of their preparation. In the 2006-2007 school year, the same group used a combination of paper pencil activities as well as the supplemental, web-based computer program Study Island. The group used the Study Island program six times a month. The Study Island program offered these students and their teachers' real time feedback on assessments taken so that instruction could be tailored to fit the deficiencies of the student's knowledge base.

A survey was also sent to the teachers and students asking about their perceptions and opinions of the Study Island program. These results were infused with the hard data of the performance of the selected eighth grade students using the program. The sample was given a practice eighth grade reading achievement test equivalent to the seventh grade reading achievement test to compare the effect of test preparation having utilized the Study Island program. Differences in performance were statistically calculated and conclusions were made about the significance of using the Study Island program for reading achievement test preparation.

Assumptions

1. Each class included in the sample had the same amount of instruction using Study Island.
2. Reading instruction was equivalent between eighth grade teachers.
3. Reading instruction was equivalent between seventh grade teachers.
4. Students will give their best effort on testing days.
5. The demographics and ability level of the eighth grade students were equivalent to the same group from last year as seventh graders.

Limitations

1. Some student's abilities had not progressed between their seventh and eighth grade year as most subjects in the sample, with respect to reading abilities as per the Accelerated Reading Program.
2. Students were being taught by two different reading teachers using different in class teaching strategies on some topics.
3. Teachers used their discretion to use Study Island at different times in their instructional timeline, but used it consistently twice a month.

Delimitations

1. Special education students, economically disadvantaged students, and gifted students were not in proportion to the researched school district or junior high because of the convenience sample taken.
2. Survey questions were devised after looking at Study Island's teacher and student surveys. They were peer reviewed, but not piloted.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

In accordance to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), states must assess students' abilities on standards of performance by using achievement tests in reading, math, writing, science, and social studies. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is established by each state and must be based on growth in student achievement that is continuous and substantial. Every child learns regardless of barriers such as low parent income or troubled family backgrounds. Based on the fact that teachers have to produce a certain amount of students that pass the state achievement test to show adequate yearly progress, most teachers strictly adhere to state standards and assessment to guide curriculum choices and tailor daily lessons (United States Department of Education, 2001). The creator of Study Island, Dave Muzzo, based his web-based software on these facts (Muzzo, 2006).

Preparing students for achievement tests challenges teachers to make decisions about the types of test preparation or practice assessments they will use in the classroom. According to Johannessen and Kahn some of the strategies for preparing students for high stakes tests include becoming assessment literate, finding out exactly what a test measures, encouraging a positive approach toward assessment as part of the teaching and learning process, giving practice tests, and avoiding competition between students (2001).

Computer technology is also becoming a big part of preparing for tests and a way of conducting business for teachers in their classrooms (Thompson,

Thurlow, Moore, 2003). Technology is used throughout society in supermarkets, banks, and in places of business (Ediger, 2006). Technology in educational settings has dramatically increased because of the use of the internet and on-line learning. Integrating the use of computer programs and strategies for preparing students to take achievement tests creates opportunities and benefits for students and teachers (Thompson et al, 2003). Incorporating technology into educational testing and test preparation offers students an interactive opportunity to monitor their learning and empower teachers to manage their time more efficiently in the classroom (Demirci, 2005)

Comprehensive coursewares are computer programs that offer students a different approach to learning other than the traditional textbook, paper, and pencil way (Colbey, 2000). According to Colbey, comprehensive courseware can be used in many forms such as: online programs, software packages, supplemental classroom lessons, distance learning, or for test preparation (2000). On-line versions are superior to software packages just because they can be updated more often and offer special e-mail components allowing teachers, students, and parents to communicate. Comprehensive courseware also gives struggling students more opportunities to practice concepts by using engaging visual media or audio options without the teacher guiding them through every process they don't understand (Colbey, 2000). However, it is important to remember that technology cannot replace mastery of the content of the standards

being taught, especially for learning disabled or at-risk students in the areas of reading and writing (Thompson et.al, 2003). Reading instruction that takes place on the computer is an approach that is individualized. It allows the learner the ability to move at their own pace (Ediger, 2006). Preparing students to take reading achievement tests means that teachers must manage their time in their classrooms more efficiently, making sure all students are engaged in active learning at all times. Teachers have more opportunities to target smaller groups, especially in reading instruction, with the use of test preparation computer programs in their classrooms. (Ediger, 2006).

According to Ediger (2006), computerized reading instruction and testing is offered in several modes. A tutorial mode is repetitious in that it guides students in a repetitive manner. Students read something, respond to it, and the computer checks for accuracy giving instant feedback . Drill and practice formats use basic sight vocabulary as opposed to index cards with words written on them that are flashed in front of students in hopes that they memorize the words. A third mode of computerized reading instruction is diagnosis and remediation, attempting to find out specifically what the child is doing wrong. Simulation is a testing format used to provide a life-like problem for students to have to solve. The fifth model is gaming, which captures the students' interests and motivates them to continue learning (Ediger, 2006). When working on reading skills such as author's purpose, inference, and word meaning, it is important to give immediate and

specific details to kids who are using these computerized, recall strategies (Simpson, 2002).

Computerized Adaptive Testing (CAT) refers to the individuality that computers offer to examinees (Sireci, 2003). CAT systems tailor the complexity or remedial nature of test questions based on the answers given. According to Sireci (2003) CAT allows the teacher to examine results with fewer questions and in less time than traditional, paper/ pencil assessments. This leads to reduced anxiety. It also engages students in the learning process, which better prepares them for standardized testing (Colbey, 2000). Simpson (2002) states that students' motivation and confidence levels improved when given the opportunity of using a computerized test preparation program.

On-going, interactive assessment offers teachers the opportunity to monitor student progress over greater lengths of time and slowly make continuous improvement towards school's educational goals and a districts' AYP (Study Island, 2006). According to Study Island (2006) assessment is goal oriented when students are able to determine their purpose for learning and align them with the state standards. Goals that are clearly shared can be used to assess students' comprehension of material which focuses instruction as well as making it more clear and effective. Instant or timely feedback of student assessments also helps educators adapt their learning environments to fit the ability level of their students (Study Island, 2006).

Computerized programs aid in the success of students preparing for high stakes tests, and allow for teachers to customize instruction to each, individual child. With real time data at educators' fingertips the aligning of state standards to students ability levels is made more manageable. Engaging students in test preparation technology that is fun and rewarding lets students achieve success within the assessment realm reducing test anxiety. Schools districts that have more successful students make greater gains on their AYP.

Study Island was founded on the principles of real time assessment being a learning tool as well as a guide for teachers' to promote targeted lessons. It is meant to raise students' confidence and awareness in reading and other achievement test and state standards based material (Muzzo, 2006). CAT systems tailor instruction, be it remedial or advanced, and allow teachers to review results in less time than traditional paper, pencil tasks (Sireci, 2003). Study Island provides opportunities listed in Ediger's (2006) research on how student's become better readers incorporating all of his online strategies, the most popular among students being gaming. Based on the research reviewed, each aspect of computer test preparation directly relates to how comfortable and prepared the students are to take the state achievement tests. Study Island is one of the programs providing greatly needed support to students and teachers in each school district's quest to improve test scores and better student learning in an age of new and improving educational technology.

Chapter III
Procedures of the Study
Subjects

The population of students used in this study came from a school located in Miami County, Ohio. The school district is in a small city within a rural setting. The district currently serves 3,712 students as of February 1, 2007, with 550 of those students educated at the junior high school. As a district 43% of students were economically disadvantaged; within the junior high population, 45% were economically disadvantaged. The convenience sample for this case study was taken from two eighth grade classrooms. From the 31 subject sample, all were eighth graders during the 2006-2007 school year and all were enrolled in the same junior high as seventh graders during the 2005-2006 school year. Out of the sample, 12 were identified as economically disadvantaged, one was labeled and receiving special education services, and zero were identified as gifted students.

All subjects took the seventh grade Ohio Reading Achievement Test in the spring of 2006. No students received an advanced rating, four students received an accelerated rating, 25 students received a proficient rating, one student received a basic rating, and one student received a limited rating. A 70% or 400 points is recognized as a passing or proficient score and is favorable for the school districts AYP. Permission was granted from the subjects' parents for the researcher to be able to use data ascertained during the case study.

There were also eight Language Arts teachers surveyed during the case study. Seven teachers returned their surveys. These surveys were compared to surveys given to the student subjects on the same topics having to do with the independent variable in the study. Education and experience levels for the teachers surveyed varied, but training on the Study Island program was the same.

Instrumentation

A mixed design of quantitative and qualitative instrumentation and data was used. Students and teachers were given surveys with similar questions to determine feelings and relationships on using the Study Island program. Study Island teacher and student surveys were reviewed by the researcher. Parts of these surveys were modified to fit categories such as likeability, motivation, use, questioning, and feedback. Surveys are located in Appendix A. An interview was conducted over the phone with the creator and owner of Study Island to gain insight and background information on the Study Island program. Field notes are located in Appendix B. The 2005, eighth grade, Ohio Reading Achievement Test was also given to the sample after subjects were treated with the Study Island program. An official answer key used to grade the test was downloaded from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) website. Documents from the state of Ohio stating students' test results from last year's Ohio reading Achievement Test were also used to compare with results from this year's placebo test, which was also downloaded from the ODE website.

Procedures

Teachers using the Study Island program attended a two hour training session in September, 2006. This was the first year for the junior high to have used Study Island. The program was used primarily by Language Arts teachers to prepare for mastery of reading and writing Ohio state standards and achievement tests. For the 2005-2006 school year students used the Buckle Down series of workbooks and practice tests, published by Ohio Buckle Down Publishing, to prepare for the reading achievement test. For the 2006-2007 school year the same group of students used the Buckle Down series of workbooks and practice tests as well as the computerized test preparation program, Study Island. The subjects used Study Island for 42 minutes, or one class period, once a week, for four months, prior to taking the mock reading achievement test. Results from the two tests were compared using measures of comparison by way of a non-independent t-test.

Surveys were given to the junior high's eight Language Arts teachers and the sample was also given a student survey. The survey questions were meant to address how the teachers and students felt about using Study Island, what they liked or disliked about it, and some possible solutions to any concerns they had with the web-based computer program. The researcher wanted to hear from teachers and students if Study Island was a worthwhile and beneficial program that the junior high would want to purchase again in the future. The questions were grouped in the following categories: ease of use and likeability, preparedness for the Ohio Reading Achievement Test, instant feedback and

real-time data, length and complexity of the reading questions, instruction of reading material, feeling of comfort, confidence, and motivation when it came time to take the Ohio Reading Achievement Test, and user preferences of written material, computerized programs, or a combination of both. The answers were analyzed by comparing certain categories of questions to add to the description and generalizability of the subjects' test results. All questions were close-ended. The surveys were distributed to the teachers via their school mailboxes with an accompanying letter and were returned within the week. A parent permission letter is located in Appendix C.

The phone interview with the creator of Study Island, Dave Muzzo, took place on November 29, 2006 at 10:00 A.M. eastern time. The questions were open-ended. The background data gathered added to the triangulation of data.

Chapter IV

Analysis of the Data

Data analysis took place in various forms according to the information collected. Subjects completed their eighth grade mock Ohio Reading Achievement Tests (ORAT), and were graded according to the official scoring guidelines downloadable from the Ohio Department of Education website. Their scores were compared to their seventh grade ORAT scores after having been treated with the use of Study Island for four months prior to taking the eighth grade test. The 31 student's who participated in the study also anonymously took a 15 close-ended question survey, which was analyzed, graphed, and compared to the seven teacher surveys the researcher received back on the topic of Study Island. Field notes taken from an interview with Study Island creator, Dave Muzzo, were also infused within the analysis of data taken.

The 31 subjects' results, after preparing with Study Island, were scored using a non-independent, unpaired t-test. The two-tailed P value equaled 0.1504, and the t value equaled 1.4568, determining a difference that was not statistically significant. The scores grouped together by level of achievement in Table 1, show that as a whole the students performance dropped. The mean of the subject's seventh grade scores was 416.97. The mean of the subject's eighth grade scores was 410.52. A score of 400 is needed to be considered proficient and is a passing score according to the Ohio Department of Education.

TABLE 1

Ohio Reading Achievement Test Scores

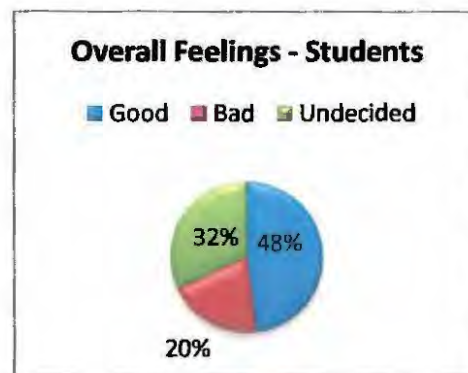
	Seventh Grade Scores	Eighth Grade Scores
Advanced	0	0
Accelerated	4	5
Proficient	25	15
Basic	1	10
Limited	1	1
Total Students	31	31

Student and teacher surveys were tallied and used for determining the overall comfort level, motivational factors, and educational value that was provided by using Study Island. The majority of the teachers using the Study Island program responded positively overall as noted in Graph 1. The answers from the subjects as compared to the teachers on the same question, were a little less positive about using the web-based software when it came time for an overall rating (Graph 2).

GRAPH 1



GRAPH 2



Preparedness was a concern across the board with everyone involved in the study. Would the students become more prepared and confident in taking the ORAT than if they had not used Study Island? Item numbers 15 and 16 on the teacher survey explored the comfort and confidence level, as well as student's preparedness for taking the ORAT after having used the Study Island program. The teachers were divided about their student's comfort and confidence level as shown in Graph 3. However, they did feel that their student's preparedness level increased by using Study Island, and felt that their student's scores would be higher than in their seventh grade year (Graph 4).

GRAPH 3

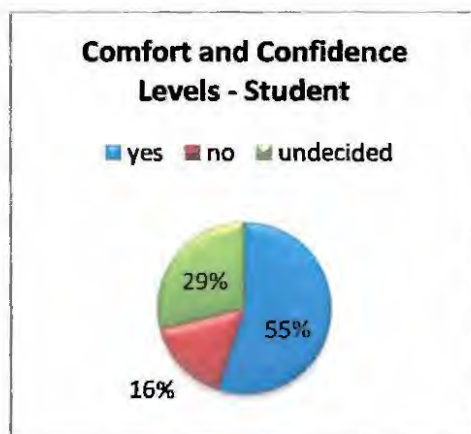


GRAPH 4

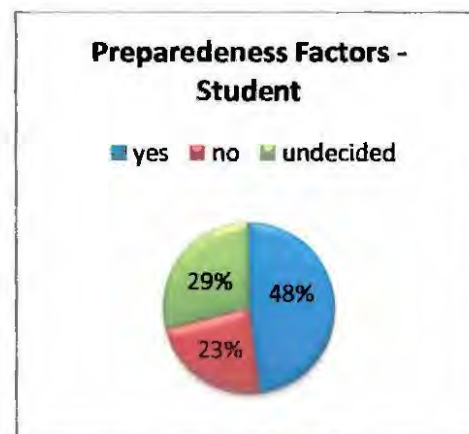


Surveys revealed that the students were split about their feelings on comfort, confidence, and preparedness after using Study Island to help prepare for the ORAT. As noted in Graphs 5 and 6, the sample surveyed had slightly more students that said they felt more comfortable taking the ORAT, after having used Study Island. 48% of the students agreed that they were more prepared to take the ORAT, than the 52% that said they were not better prepared, or were undecided.

GRAPH 5



GRAPH 6



Other data contributing to the generalizability of the study were the survey items pertaining to the test questions used by Study Island. According to Dave Muzzo (2006), Study Island randomly sends out student and teacher surveys to ask opinions on length and difficulty of test questions, and determine if the questions are aligned with the state standards. When surveying the chosen junior high's sample group of students, 77% of the group reported the reading questions being "just right" in difficulty, and 23% reported the reading questions were "too hard". Seventy-one percent of teachers, who responded to the same surveyed item on test question difficulty, said that Study Island reading

questions were "just right", and 29% said they were "too hard". Teachers agreed 100% that the questions on Study Island were all aligned to the Ohio state standards.

One hundred percent of the teachers reported a high comfort level with using internet based technology. Participating teachers reported 3 – 28 years of experience, and levels of education attained were Bachelors - Masters + 30 semester hours. All teachers agreed using both written and computer based preparation programs would be helpful in preparing for the ORAT. Fifty-five percent of students agreed that using both forms of instruction would lead to better preparation for the ORAT, 16% said no to using both forms of instruction, and 29% were undecided. Motivational factors also contributed to student's willingness to use Study Island seriously. Ed McCord, junior high principal, increased motivation to use Study Island by giving away i-Pods, a computerized musical and gaming device, in random drawings that included students, who achieved blue and white ribbons, conveying passing and improvement scores on Study Island test questions. When surveyed only 39% of the sample group noted their use of Study Island was only to increase their chances of winning the i-Pods. Overall feelings about Study Island were not consistent among the teachers surveyed when asked if they wanted to use Study Island more, or less. Referring back to Graph 1, 86% of teachers had an overall good feeling about Study Island, compared to only 29% of the surveyed teachers who wanted to use the program more. Fifty-two percent of surveyed students wanted to use the program more, which was more conducive to their overall positive feelings (48%) as noted in Graph 2.

Chapter V

Summary

Study Island was put to the test to determine its relevance and importance in the selected junior high by treating 31 subjects for 42 minutes, once a week, for four months, prior to taking a mock reading achievement test. Subjects were exposed to the regular reading curriculum and Ohio Buckle Down reading achievement, test preparation workbook series while using the web-based Study Island program. A t-test was used to analyze the scores.

A review of literature on computerized assessment programs and an in-depth interview with Study Island creator Dave Muzzo provided the researcher with field experience and background knowledge. A student survey was given to the 31 student sample and loosely paralleled a teacher survey given to the primary users of the Study Island program; the Language Arts teachers of the selected junior high school. The surveys expressed the participant's feelings and attitudes towards the areas of confidence, motivation, and academic preparedness in reading while using Study Island.

Conclusions

Student scores dropped from the seventh grade ORAT to the eighth grade mock ORAT. A t-test was used to analyze these scores, which showed no significant statistical difference. The mean of the reading achievement scores went from 416.97 in the seventh

grade to 410.52 in the eighth grade. The surveys given provided a better understanding of how teachers and students felt about using Study Island. Overall, the likeability factor for Study Island was higher among teachers even though only two out of seven surveyed would like to use the program more. Forty-eight percent of students had good overall feelings and 52% wanted to use the program more. Confidence levels among students and teachers were very similar with more than half of each group becoming more comfortable and confident in the student's ability to pass the ORAT after having used Study Island. Seventy-two percent of the teachers felt their students would be more prepared to take the ORAT after using Study Island.

The percentages were similar again between the teachers and the students when asked about Study Island test question difficulty. 77% of students and 71% of teachers responded that Study Island test questions were "just right" as opposed to being "too hard" or "too easy". The motivation to use Study Island on the student's behalf, was for more academic purposes, such as completing teacher assignments and preparing for the ORAT. Most students did not use Study Island for the dangling carrot, or i-Pods, the principal was using to motivate students to use the program; only 39% of the sample reported using Study Island for this purpose.

The integration of using written instruction and computerized instruction does not generally mean higher test scores. Feelings and motivational factors for some students indicate that they are more successful with a multitude of learning styles infused into their reading curriculum as shown when one student increased his score from a basic

score, to an accelerated score. In the end, the use of Study Island did not provide higher test scores, but did provide students with another opportunity to apply knowledge gained through written classroom assignments toward a technological assessment tool that provided teachers with real-time data. This data lent itself to changes made by teachers within their daily lessons or curricula, as per the 86% of teachers surveyed on item 13 of the teacher survey.

Implications

A computerized test preparation program such as Study Island could be utilized as a supplemental resource for teachers to provide students with additional practice using different learning modalities. Incorporating real-time data to tailor lessons or reteach materials would allow teachers to apply the results of the diagnostic tools Study Island provides. Benchmarking student's success or failure could be achieved very easily with a program such as Study Island. It is by no means a replacement for traditional paper/pencil tasks that represent traditional tests like the Ohio Reading Achievement Test. With this in mind, teachers may want to take advantage of the printing capabilities that Study Island has to offer. By printing some of the tests instead of students taking them online, the teacher would still be utilizing the program, and would have greater control over the assignment given to the students. The only draw back to this method is the time it would take the teacher to grade the tests.

Finally the teachers could also have controlled the way the students used Study Island when online. Instead of using the fun games that are associated with all of the tests, teacher's could become more strict and limit game playing to students who have passed tests in the general testing mode a certain number of times, or to a certain degree of difficulty. All in all, the Study Island program could be integrated, but not relied upon, in any well-rounded curriculum.

Study Island also has a remedial feature that could help any students with a learning disability. This feature takes tests and decreases the degree of difficulty to the student's ability level. Each test is designed to break down the topics into smaller chunks of information if a student has consistently failed those tests. Students can be more successful at completing the more focused tests and can access the quick hit lessons associated with tests they fail. This would mean more independent learning for those learners who rely heavily on teacher support. It also provides the teachers with the real-time data to instantly show where these learners are according to on grade level performance indicators.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher could have controlled and compared more variables within the study which should be incorporated into future research for teachers using Study Island. One aspect that could have been compared was the survey questions to the student's scores. The student's individual feelings about Study Island could have negatively affected their test scores, which would be pertinent information for educators to know.

Utilizing the entire school year and increasing the length of time students were using Study Island could have made a difference in the results of the study. Testing an entire grade, including all students, and using the actual scores from the Ohio Department of Education, would most likely change the results and would make them more valid and reliable.

Providing the teachers with more Study Island or basic computerized test preparation software training would allow more application of these programs in more classrooms, making it a regular part of a student's schedule. With the web-based program being new to the junior high in the study, some advanced application skills or more creative ways to use the program may have been lost to the novelty of the entire process. This would especially include usage of real-time data gathered from each student and used to immediately enhance classroom teaching.

As more teachers and school districts use Study Island, a broader search for improved learning could take place between school districts that have similar demographic backgrounds. It could also provide teachers with new ideas on how to incorporate technology such as Study Island into their curriculum to become more competitive in the age of districts vying for those top test results and passing rates. This topic concerns all schools who are trying new technology, other Ohio Achievement Test preparation materials, and new learning activities to try and raise their achievement test scores and continue making their school districts Annual Yearly Progress plan.

Appendices

Appendix A
Teacher Letter and Survey
Student Survey

3/26/07

Dear Language Arts Teachers,

I am currently doing my thesis for my master's degree at Urbana University and I need your help! My research is about how using Study Island can potentially affect student's test scores on the Ohio Reading Achievement Test. By answering the following survey you will be assisting me in my Study Island findings! Attached are coupons for a free coffee/drink and donut to thank you for your time. Please return the survey, to my mailbox, by Thursday, 3/29/07.

Thanks again,



Heather Brandt



Study Island Survey- Teacher

Directions: Circle the choice that you most agree with. (Y=Yes, N=No, or U=Undecided)

1. Was Study Island easy to use?Y N U
2. Was Study Island easy for students to use?.....Y N U
3. Do you feel you received enough training to use Study Island?.....Y N U
4. Do you want more training to use Study Island?.....Y N U
5. Did you utilize the customer service trouble shooting feature of Study Island?.....Y N U
6. Your overall experience with Study Island was Good?.....Y N U
Bad?.....Y N U
Not Sure?.....Y N U
7. Did you use Study Island to enhance your student's preparation for the Ohio Reading Achievement Test?.....Y N U
8. Do you like using Study Island?Y N U
9. Do you like the real-time data reports you can receive in Study Island?(%scores, student ranking, class and individual scores).....Y N U
10. Were the reading questions Too Hard?.....Y N U
Too Easy?.....Y N U
Just Right?.....Y N U
11. Were the reading passages Too Long?.....Y N U
Too Short?.....Y N U
Just Right?.....Y N U
12. Were the reading questions aligned with the state standards?.....Y N U
13. Did the scores on Study Island make you reteach or tailor your reading lessons?.....Y N U
14. If given a choice would you: Use only written instruction?.....Y N U
Use only Study Island?.....Y N U
Use both?.....Y N U
15. Do you think using Study Island will help students feel more comfortable or confident taking the reading OAT?.....Y N U
16. Do you think Study Island will help students achieve a higher score on the reading OAT?.....Y N U
17. Would you like to use Study Island More?.....Y N U
Less?.....Y N U
18. Do you feel comfortable using the computer or the internet?.....Y N U
19. Years of experience teaching - _____
20. Level of education attained - _____





Study Island Survey – Student

Directions: Circle the choice that you most agree with. (Y=yes, N=no, or U=Undecided)

1. Was Study Island easy to use?Y N U
2. Your overall experience with Study Island was Good?.....Y N U
Bad?Y N U
Not Sure?.....Y N U
3. Did using Study Island prepare you for taking the Ohio Reading Achievement Test?.....Y N U
4. Did you like using Study Island?.....Y N U
5. Did you like the instant feedback like The ribbons?.....Y N U
The high score tables?.....Y N U
The percent scores?.....Y N U
6. Were the reading questions Too hard?.....Y N U
Too easy?Y N U
Just right?.....Y N U
7. Were the reading passages Too long?Y N U
Too short?.....Y N U
Just right?.....Y N U
8. Did taking the reading tests on Study Island make you ask your teacher questions about the material?.....Y N U
9. Did Study Island help to answer any of your questions?.....Y N U
10. Did you feel more comfortable taking the Ohio Reading Achievement test after using Study Island?.....Y N U
11. Were you motivated to use Study Island only because of the rewards offered (i-pods)?.....Y N U
12. Would you have rather used only paper/pencil (workbooks) activities to prepare for the state reading test?.....Y N U
13. Do you think a combination of using Study Island and paper/pencil activities will prepare you best for taking the state reading test?.....Y N U
14. Would you only like to use Study Island to prepare for the state reading test?.....Y N U
15. Would you like to use Study Island: More?.....Y N U
Or Less?.....Y N U

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Appendix B
Interview Field Notes

Notes on Study Island : 11-29-06 10:00am with David Muzzo (Creator of study island)

- Started in 2000
- Built a general study tool where teachers could import their own information (lessons, tests, etc...) to create their own practice sessions for students
 - Learned about standards based teaching and test like proficiency and achievement tests - wanted to create something that was more useful and standards based.
- Started with OH - Dave is from OH - and created Learning Outcomes which were test oriented and standards based questions that teachers could get immediate feedback from after students took
- Always web-based
- At first they didn't have lessons or explanations, no blue ribbons added
- Always had test mode and a few games included
- There was no class making ability and reporting was a lot less than what is offered today
- Feedback is always used to improve and was used to improve features for teacher and administrators - real time data and report features, also added lessons, explanations, and remedial features
- Staff of 12 content writers - with 2 managers - split into teams (science and math & social studies and language arts)
- Staff writers are younger (having taken all of the tests themselves and know what the school testing environment is like) and all have degrees, but only are former teachers. All are academically minded.
- In 24 different states
- Not included in any educational journals
- Have studies presently going on about study island - Texas A&M group(science focus) and K-12 virtual academy is also doing study (Fort Worth study on web site - worth looking at)
- Sales team and training team - about 15 trainers, a lot of former teachers, sales are all teachers as well.
- Formulate the content from state to state based on their standards - content is NOT solely based on achievement tests, but on standards!
- Study at U. of AZ is what SI was based upon - the theory that assessment is a very useful tool in getting kids to learn - not just drill and kill
- Usage counts - test scores will reflect how much students have used the program
- New benchmarking feature - BETA release - link to benchmarking on log on page - like short cycle assessments that mirror the state tests - can set this feature up for students to access only the benchmarking test you want them to take, (maybe an option for my end of the thesis test) OH is one of the BETA test states
- Every week they randomly select a group of teachers to send surveys to - research the trends in complaints and positive comments to constantly keep program up to date and fix problems (areas of concern from the past=reading passages - too long, and question volume)

- Research going on right now with other students in masters programs, but haven't had the time to publish or organize this information – fast growing company with limited staffing capabilities
- Will send surveys for me to use or look at

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Appendix C
Parent Permission Letter

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1/22/2007

Dear Parents,

My name is Heather Brandt and I am a teacher at PJHS. I am currently enrolled at Urbana University working on my graduate degree in Education. This semester I am writing my thesis, which is a research paper that will be my final project, before graduating this spring. My topic is the computerized test preparation program, Study Island, which your son or daughter is currently using in school right now to prepare for the upcoming Ohio Achievement Tests.

I would like your permission to include your son or daughter in my research. Their names will not be used, nor will they be pointed out in any way. I will use their progress, as a group, on a practice achievement test, to see if Study Island was a useful tool. They will still be using Study Island in their reading classes even if they don't add to the data I am collecting.

Thank you for your help with my project and completing my graduate degree.

Sincerely,



Heather Brandt

____ I give permission for my son/daughter's information and data to be used in Heather Brandt's thesis.

____ I do not give permission for my son/daughter's information and data to be used in Heather Brandt's thesis.

X _____
Signature of parent

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