

Borrego Reading Academy REPORT CARD – 2017

The Reading Academy, a BASIC (Basic Assistance for Students in the Community) program, is a community-embedded “school without walls” that was held at the Steele-Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center. Full-day classes were scheduled for four weeks beginning July 13, 2017.

The second summer Reading Academy helped eighteen 2nd and 3rd grade students from Borrego Springs Unified School District increase their literacy proficiency. The four-week intensive literacy/reading program is patterned over a highly successful program in Richmond, Indiana, now in its tenth year. It is described at www.everychildcanread.org

This year we also offered an English Language Learning (ELL) class to thirteen middle school and high school students in our community.

Program Objectives for 2nd and 3rd grade students

- All students will improve their reading and English Language Arts performance measured by pre and post testing and standardized tests
- 35 - 50% of our students
 - will reach their reading grade equivalent on a standardized test
 - become word strong by building a grade level vocabulary
- Demonstrate 95% daily attendance
- Increase positive attitudes toward reading and a love of learning

Program Objectives for ELL students

- All students will improve their English language fluency, reading, writing and vocabulary measured by pre and post testing
- Demonstrate 95% daily attendance

2017 Outcomes for All Students

- 31 students enrolled and 31 students completed the 20 day program
- 98.5% overall attendance rate
- The 18 children about to enter 3rd and 4th grades were tested at the beginning and again at the end of the 4-week period using FOUNTAS & PINNELL testing. Each child improved. The average improvement was 4.1 months; the range was 1 to 9 months.
- When comparing results on standard tests administered by the school in the spring and the fall, 3rd and 4th grade Reading Academy students performed **significantly better** than their non-Academy peers.
- The 13 middle and high school ELL students, now in grades 6 to 12, were tested for reading, speaking and understanding at the beginning and again at the end of the Academy. Each of them improved; 9 of them improved by 1 grade level and 4 improved by 2 grade levels.

Feedback from all audiences has been excellent:

From the students...

- "I would recommend this class "because it really helps you.""
- "I learned that you have to keep trying"
- "I would tell my friends to come because I want them to learn more."."
- "I loved the project because it was a fun challenge to me." "
- "I used to be bad at reading and I got better."
- "The games helped me with speaking in front of other people."
- "...we communicate with each other and practice the talk and get more confidence."

From the families...

- "My child loves it. She gets everything set up each night, even her water bottle in the fridge, to be ready to go in the morning."
- " My brother is reading more now and he has found his voice and is more confident speaking in public."

From their classroom teachers in the fall...

- "The majority of the ELL students are in my class and I do see a difference.""
- " I hope this program continues."
- "After reviewing writing and reading samples, three of the students from the Reading Academy ELL class will be moving to a higher ELD class."

Background Research indicates that children spend their early school years (grades 1 to 3) learning basic literacy skills. After grade 3 they use those literacy skills to learn everything else. Statistically, children who do not read at grade level by the end of grade 3 get further and further behind in subsequent grades. They rarely close the gap and are at high risk for dropping out of school. Literacy enables people to learn and comprehend, think critically, solve problems, share information and interact effectively with others – all important skills for life and career success. Historically 40 – 60% of Borrego's third graders do not read at grade level.

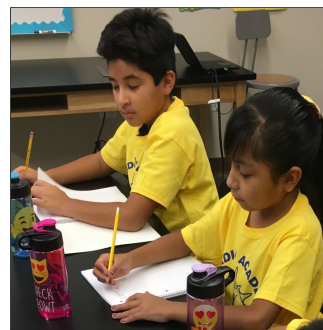
Structure Two trained teachers and two instructional aides developed and led the classes for literacy/reading for the 2nd and 3rd grade students. The program used best small group teaching practices targeted to students in the 2nd and 3rd grades who need a literacy "boost".

One ELL training specialist and one instructional aide developed curriculum to expand vocabulary and improve reading, writing and speaking capabilities for students in a fun learning environment for the middle and high school students.

A headmaster was also present to manage all administrative issues.

Other "key features" that define the Reading Academy include:

- Door-to-door bus service
- Free hot breakfast and lunch every day
- Free books for the students' personal home libraries
- Free t-shirts and backpacks to build identity and pride
- Incentives for weekly attendance and perfect attendance award of an iPad
- Celebration event with certificates of completion



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