

# Case Study:

## Early Elementary Phonics Intervention Improves Word Fluency



Research Performed by Judy Peacock, Ed.S.

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With special thanks to Jodie Broussard, M.Ed, Reading Coach and Kristin Cain, M.Ed, Reading Teacher who worked together with Ms. Peacock on this study.

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### QUOTES

“*Simon taught students how to approach reading in a systematic, fun and interactive way!*”

Judy Peacock, Ed.S.

#### Background:

A six-week trial using Simon S.I.O. (Sounds It Out) with two kindergarten, first and second grade general education classes was conducted at Brentwood Elementary School, Pensacola, Florida from April-May, 2007.

A total of 43 students participated in the experimental group and accessed Simon S.I.O. three times a week in a computer lab for approximately 10 to 20 minutes per session. The control group containing 48 students did not have access to this software.

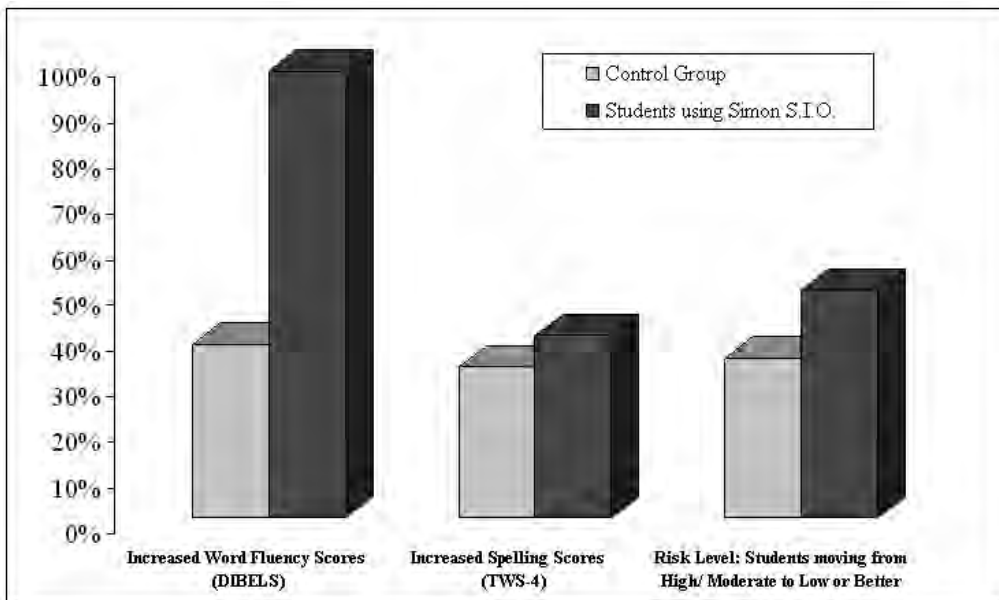


All students in both the experimental and control group were administered the Test of Written Spelling, version 4 (TWS-4), a norm referenced test, as a pre-and post-test assessment. The students were also assessed pre-and post-test using DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency measure.

#### Results:

Based on the DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency measure, 98% of the students in the experimental group had an increase in scores. In the control group, only 38% of students had increased scores. Due to absences, some students did not participate in all TWS-4 testing. Based on the TWS-4 assessment, 40% of the 35 students tested in the experimental group had an increase in scores as compared to only 33% increase in the control group of 40 students.

A total of 26 students were identified in the experimental group as being in the High or Moderate Risk level as determined by the Nonsense Word Fluency measure of DIBELS. Twenty-five of these students increased their scores, including 13 (50%) who increased their level to the Low Risk category or higher.



*This graph illustrates the significantly high impact Simon S.I.O. made for students in this control study to increase their word fluency and spelling skills while decreasing their risk level.*

In comparison, 20 students in the control group were identified as being in the High or Moderate Risk level as determined by the Nonsense Word Fluency measure of DIBELS. Of these students, a total of only 7 (35%) students increased their DIBELS level to the Low Risk category or higher.

When asked about why she chose Simon S.I.O. for a pilot study Ms. Peacock said, "Our district has worked with Don Johnston Incorporated for several years in order to provide supplemental literacy interventions to support struggling learners. I train teachers to implement and use supportive technologies. In our first school

pilot, I saw improved academic achievement from older students using Don Johnston's Start-to-Finish® Literacy Starters and Core Content audio and computer books. After doing this pilot, I wondered what other products could I use to help my students. This led me to the Simon S.I.O. pilot. You can see from this study the successful results we achieved to improve student outcomes and increase their fluency skills."

### Next Steps

Ms. Peacock will continue the research focusing on using Simon S.I.O. as an intervention tool for students that scored in the lower two levels as determined by the Nonsense Word Fluency measure of DIBELS. A second comparative Simon S.I.O. study will be conducted for an extended period of time at the local elementary school. Jodie Broussard, M.Ed, Reading Coach at Brentwood Elementary School said, "I really like Simon S.I.O. and observed many students in our study become actively engaged in the fluency process of sounding out letters and words. The software program is now installed on 4th/5th grade general classroom computers and used with students who are identified as learning disabled. This year we also analyzed DIBELS scores for 1st & 2nd graders focused on their Nonsense Word Fluency. We assigned Simon to students at high risk. Four times a week, they participate in a computer lab to work with a reading teacher who monitors their progress; runs data reports and prepares worksheets."

*“The case study by Ms. Peacock highlights the importance and power of giving students a way to develop high levels of fluency in the foundational skills of reading. We are only starting to understand how powerful technology-based differentiated instruction can be, especially for struggling learners.”*



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