

Summary of Educational Data Systems' 2005 California Reading First Evaluation Report

Background of Reading First

The U.S. Congress created the Reading First program to put proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms. Through Reading First, states and districts receive support to apply scientifically based reading research to ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of third grade. The program provides formula grants to states that submit an approved application. State Education Agencies (SEAs) award sub-grants to eligible Local Education Agencies (LEAs) on a competitive basis. SEAs fund those proposals that show the most promise for raising student achievement and for successfully implementing reading instruction, particularly at the classroom level. Only programs that are founded on scientifically based reading research are eligible for funding through Reading First.

Purpose of this Analysis

Results of Educational Data Systems' 2005 California Reading First Report were examined by researchers at SRA/McGraw-Hill to determine what impact *Open Court Reading* (OCR) program had on the reading levels of elementary school students who were reading at or below their own grade level.

Participants

As noted in Educational Data Systems' 2005 California Reading First Evaluation Report, the instructional and assessment tools used to implement Reading First in California varied from city to city and from district to district. However, many districts across the state subscribed to SRA/McGraw-Hill's *Open Court Reading*. In fact, in 2004, there were 339 Reading First schools using *Open Court Reading* exclusively, 313 others using a separate literacy program, and 10 more using *Open Court Reading* in conjunction with another literacy program. The table below shows that the number of schools in California participating in Reading First increased by nearly 20 percent from 2004 to 2005.

Table 1. Number of Reading First School by Intervention

Intervention	Number of Schools in 2004	Number of Schools in 2005
Open Court Reading	339	369
Non-Open Court Reading	313	440
Combined	10	11
Total	662	820

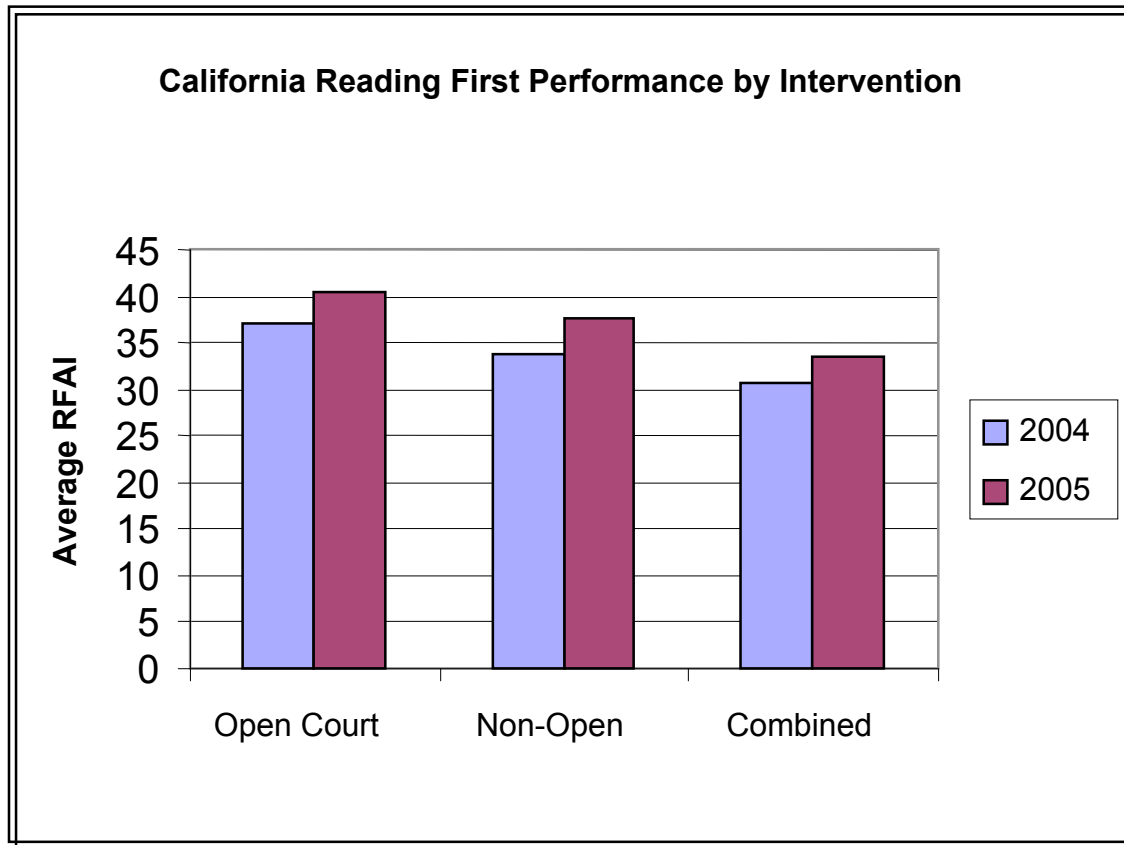
Measure of Success

The California Department of Education devised its own formula to determine the success rate of Reading First schools. The formula consists of the California Standards Test (CST) scores for Grades 2–3, which were weighted at 60 percent (30 percent for each grade level); the California Achievement Test/6 (CAT/6) scores for third grade, which were weighted at 10 percent (6 percent reading, 2 percent language arts, and 2 percent spelling); and the C-TAC End-of-Year assessment scores, which accounted for 30 percent (5 percent for third grade, 10 percent for second grade, 10 percent for first grade, and 5 percent for kindergarten). The sum of each portion of the equation is equal to the Reading First Achievement Index (RFAI).

As is illustrated in Table 2, students in Reading First schools that subscribed exclusively to *Open Court Reading* in 2005 and 2005 outperformed those that subscribed to another literacy program exclusively and those that used some other literacy in conjunction with *Open Court Reading* in both years.

Table 2. California Reading First Performance by Intervention per Year

Intervention	2004		2005	
	Number of Schools	Average RFAI Score	Number of Schools	Average RFAI Score
Open Court Reading	339	37.06	369	40.46
Non-Open Court Reading	313	33.78	440	37.67
Combined	10	30.70	11	33.45
Total	662	35.41	820	38.87



Effect size may be thought of as the average performance of an experimental group weighted against that of a control group. For example, if the effect size of a given intervention is .5 standard deviations, this means the average student using that intervention performed as well or better than about 69 percent of the students not using the intervention.

Tables 3 and 4 show that when used alone, *Open Court Reading* had a greater effect on reading performance than did any other program alone or in combination with *Open Court Reading* in the California Reading First schools. For instance, students using *Open Court Reading* exclusively in 2004 outperformed nearly 65 percent of Reading First students using some program other than *Open Court Reading*. Similarly, *Open Court Reading* students performed better than 82 percent of students using *Open Court Reading* and another literacy program combined. The impact was slightly greater in 2005 with *Open Court Reading* students outperforming 77 percent of the non-*Open Court* students and 88 percent of those using *Open Court Reading* and another program.

Table 3. Impact of *Open Court Reading* on California Reading First Schools in 2004

OCR Average RFAI	Non-OCR Average RFAI	Mean Difference	Effect Size (Hedges's g)	Percentile Rank
37.06	33.78	3.28 (*)	.39	65
OCR Average RFAI	Combined Average RFAI	Mean Difference	Effect Size (Hedges's g)	Percentile Rank
37.06	30.70	6.36 (*)	.92	82

Table 4. Impact of *Open Court Reading* on California Reading First Schools in 2005

OCR Average RFAI	Non-OCR Average RFAI	Mean Difference	Effect Size (Hedges's g)	Percentile Rank
40.46	37.67	2.79(*)	.58	77
OCR Average RFAI	Combined Average RFAI	Mean Difference	Effect Size (Hedges's g)	Percentile Rank
40.46	33.45	7.01(*)	.96	88