Cornerstone Middle School in Putnam County, Tennessee, opened its doors in January 2003 after consolidating students from a nearby elementary and high school. The school serves 668 students in grades 5–8. The school population is predominantly Caucasian (95.6%) and of low socioeconomic status (60.2%). 49.5% of students schoolwide scored below proficient on the state reading test administered in 2012. A sizeable percentage of special needs students (61.3%) did not meet state standards in reading.

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IMPLEMENTATION

SRA FLEX Literacy™ was implemented in the fall of the 2012–2013 school year. Cornerstone Middle School decided to pilot SRA FLEX Literacy because the students were struggling with reading, and the school needed to acquire a curriculum program that would capture and sustain the interest of its middle school population.

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OVERVIEW

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Tammy Hunter, one of the teachers implementing the program, teaches a total of 54 students in grades 5 through 8. “It all started when we needed a program for reading intervention that began on a level that they could understand—starting even with basic sounds of letters. SRA FLEX Literacy is scientifically-based, and when we introduced this program, it supported group work, which covers the Common Core. It also allowed students to actually picture a story, so they can better comprehend it,” says Ms. Hunter.

Besides supporting group projects, the program also features an individualized component that enables students to take an online placement test covering fluency and comprehension. Ms. Hunter explains, “My students then do their lessons based on how they scored on the test. Then they take ongoing mastery tests, so I know exactly how each student is individually performing and which skills I will need to review with each of my students.”
REACTION

As an outside observer, Ms. Roberson has seen a marked difference since the program was implemented. “The class has a more focused purpose and the students are progressing. The students seem more engaged and are taking more ownership of their progress, as well as displaying pride in their progress,” she says.

SRA FLEX Literacy works seamlessly across both the digital space and the print space. As students progress through the digital experience, they participate in a variety of motivating activities that keep them actively engaged in learning.

Online remediation is built right into the program, providing students help when they need it. They can even build their own avatar and earn points toward rewards—just like games played at home. This reinforces the print exercises as students experience shared reading of robust text selections, helping them construct understanding through debate, discussion, and individualized skill application.

Seeing this applied every day in the classroom affirms the program’s success. “It’s absolutely great. Through this program, the teacher is the facilitator and the kids are actually talking to and learning from each other. I know what questions to ask so they learn on their own. And when you learn on your own, you remember it better,” says Ms. Hunter.

RESULTS

Ms. Roberson is pleased by the feedback she’s received from teachers and administrators in the building. “Based on the progress that teachers are showing with their students, I would recommend this program. Our district has high expectations for our students, and all means all—including those with disabilities. All students have the potential to learn and achieve, if the expectation is there,” she says.

She also believes that SRA FLEX Literacy is supporting the district’s overall literacy and Common Core related goals and objectives—specifically, by helping closing the gap in ELA (English Language Arts), and improving overall student reading achievement.

Who else has been pleased? Parents, according to Ms. Hunter. “I’ve gotten calls from parents who are thrilled about how much better their kids are doing,” she says. But the proof is in the testing. Based on comparison achievement tests taken before and after the program, Ms. Hunter shares that since implementing the program, many skills and abilities have improved across the board—including students’ confidence levels. “Their confidence in learning has grown,” she says. “You see it when they are answering questions and engaged in meaningful discussions about what they have just read.” Beyond that, she says, “Every single student progressed on the TCAP (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program).”

ABOUT SRA FLEX LITERACY™

SRA FLEX Literacy™ is a Reading and Language Arts intervention system for struggling readers in grades 3 and above; in Tiers 2, 3 or 4. Using a blended learning framework, students interact with comprehensive teacher-led print materials, digital instruction, and collaborative project activities that afford highly effective reading mastery.

- A powerful, flexible, data-driven intervention system
- Multiple teaching and learning modalities engage and motivate students, to make learning fun
- Comprehensive instruction supports skill development, fluency, comprehension strategies, and writing-centered projects
- The research-proven, gradual release model of instruction accelerates student learning throughout the experiences