



# THE Literacy CENTER

An interactive multisensory curriculum



## Case Study 1

*Pottsboro Elementary*

*Pottsboro, Texas*

### **Kindergartners Improve Performance on the Texas Primary Reading Inventory**

In Texas, before kindergarten students can be promoted to the first grade, they must demonstrate specific skills and knowledge on the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI). To help students develop the skills they need to pass the TPRI and help teachers meet increasing demands for accountability, many Texas schools are turning to the LEAPFROG SCHOOLHOUSE Literacy Center.

In January 2000, Pottsboro Elementary purchased The Literacy Center for each of its kindergarten classes, thanks to a state grant to help prepare students for the TPRI.

#### **Improved Performance**

Students' work on The Literacy Center has definitely paid off, as evidenced by performance gains on the TPRI. With The Literacy Center as part of the school's curriculum, more children passed the TPRI this year than ever before.

#### **Electronic Learning Tools Boost Students' Skills and Teacher Accountability**

"We purchased The Literacy Center because we felt it would be most beneficial to our children," said Cheryl West, a kindergarten teacher at Pottsboro Elementary. "The skills taught by The Literacy Center are exactly those evaluated by the Texas Primary Reading Inventory. And if that's what our children need to know to progress to the next grade level, we better be teaching it!"

Pottsboro Elementary is located in Pottsboro, Texas, a rural community 78 miles north of Dallas. Part of the Pottsboro Independent School District, the school enrolls 385 students in pre-kindergarten through grade five. The district encompasses an elementary school, middle school and high school, and serves nearly 1,300 students.

#### **The Literacy Center**

At Pottsboro Elementary, each kindergarten class has one LEAPDESK™ workstation and printer, at least 20 LEAPPAD® platforms (one for each student), and at least two LEAPMAT™ learning surfaces. The four kindergarten classes share more than 100 LEAPPAD books.

“We use The Literacy Center throughout the day,” said West, who teaches a class of 20 kindergartners. “My primary goal with The Literacy Center is to help all my students develop the skills they need to pass the TPRI and move on to the first grade.”

## **Texas Primary Reading Inventory**

At Pottsboro Elementary, teachers administer the TPRI to students in January and April to monitor their progress and adjust instruction as needed. The TPRI is an early-reading, informal-assessment instrument administered in kindergarten and grades one and two.

“The skills we test for in January and April—phonemic awareness, letter name recognition, letter sound association, phoneme blending, word blending, detecting initial sounds and ending sounds, rhyming, writing, listening comprehension—are all reinforced by The Literacy Center,” said West. “In addition, the LEAPDESK workstation pinpoints exactly where each child is and what skills we need to work on to get that child to where he or she should be.”

## **LEAPDESK Workstation**

“I use the LEAPDESK with all my students throughout the day,” said West. “If a child is having difficulty with something, I can select that particular skill and he or she can work specifically on that on the LEAPDESK.”

What Cheryl West likes best about the LEAPDESK workstation is that it can print assessment reports for each student—reports that she can then share with parents. “I print reports from the LEAPDESK each week and send them home to parents to show them exactly what skills their children have mastered,” said West. “Sometimes when you talk to parents about an area their child is having difficulty with, they’ll say, ‘Well, my child can do that at home.’ But when you have that information in black and white, it’s much easier for them to understand what skills their children have and have not mastered. The assessment reports are a great benefit. They definitely help support teacher accountability.”

## **LEAPPAD Platform**

While West enjoys the LEAPDESK workstation’s assessment reports, students’ favorite part of The Literacy Center is the LEAPPAD platform. Since each child has a LEAPPAD platform, they can work independently, in small groups, or as an entire class. “What my students like most is when they touch the pictures in the LEAPPAD books and the pictures talk to them!” she said. “They get the biggest kick out of that.”

## **LEAPMAT Learning Surface**

Like the LEAPDESK workstation and LEAPPAD platforms, the three LEAPMAT learning surfaces in West’s classroom are accessible to children all day long. “With the LEAPMAT, children just hear the sounds they’re supposed to hear. That’s important,” West explained. “When teaching the ‘t’ sound, for example, many people say ‘ta’ instead of ‘t’—they add a vowel to it. When children touch the letter ‘t’ on the LEAPMAT, they hear only the ‘t’ sound. It reinforces the phonemic awareness skills we’re working on in the classroom.”

## **Improved Performance on the TPRI**

West and her students’ work on The Literacy Center has definitely paid off, as evidenced by performance gains on the TPRI. “With The Literacy Center as part of our curriculum, I had more children pass the TPRI this year than I had before. In January 2000, just before we started using The Literacy Center, there were about ten students who did not pass the TPRI. By April 2000, all but one student had passed,” West said. “In comparison, in 1999, I had about 15 kids that did not pass the TPRI in January and four who did not pass that April. I would definitely recommend The Literacy Center to other educators—and I have,” she added. “Before we began using The Literacy Center, we didn’t have as much freedom or flexibility. Today, I can have my students work independently or in small groups or as a whole group. I have that choice. Most importantly, The Literacy Center is a great program for children—and that’s who we’re here for.”

