



Case Study #3

Kirkpatrick Elementary School
Fort Worth, Texas

The LeapTrack™ Assessment & Instruction System Helps Level the Playing Field

“More than half of my students have never been in a classroom before,” says Mil Sanderson, kindergarten teacher at Kirkpatrick Elementary in Fort Worth, Texas. Each fall she greets her incoming class knowing that fewer than half of the children have attended a preschool program. “The LeapTrack Assessment & Instruction System helps me assess the children’s skill levels and individualize their instruction to get them where they need to be as quickly as possible,” Ms. Sanderson says. “I use many of the LeapFrog™ products in my classroom, but the LeapTrack program is particularly helpful in addressing the discrepancy of skill levels among my kindergartners.”

Ms. Sanderson would like all of her students to be reading by the end of the school year, which is a challenge considering that more than half of them have had little or no exposure to the alphabet or to phonics. “The prescriptive content of the LeapTrack system helps my students learn in such a fun way that they think they are just playing,” she said. “After testing this program last spring, I know that the LeapTrack system helps my students learn what they missed by not attending preschool and master the end-of-year skills for kindergarten.”

A Unique Assessment and Instruction Program

The LeapTrack Assessment & Instruction System provides an easy-to-implement solution that enables teachers to systematically collect, record, and report assessment information, monitor student progress relative to state content standards, customize instruction for each learner, and prepare students to master skills measured on state tests.

Using a three-step instructional process of assess-report-prescribe, the LeapTrack™ system can be used to strengthen any core curriculum. It enables teachers to quickly assess all their students in reading, language arts, and math. It then generates reports for administrators, teachers, and parents to translate student performance into critical skills and state content standards that the student has or has not mastered. Lastly, it allows the teacher to produce an individualized Learning Path for each student in each curricular area based on the results of the assessment.

Because so many children have not attended school before, Ms. Sanderson's students demonstrate great diversity in their abilities throughout the year. With the LeapTrack system, she can easily assess her students at any time with the surveys provided. As the LeapTrack program "prescribes" certain books and activities based on a student's grasp of the required skills, students can pace their learning—repeating material as often as necessary, or doing it once and moving on. "This program is customized for each student," says Ms. Sanderson, "and using it every day allows students to move at their own speed to acquire the skills they need by the end of the school year."

The interactive, skill-building activities used on the LeapPad® unit with its audio support are particularly helpful with those students who speak only Spanish at home. The school population is approximately 60% Hispanic and a number of the children are English language learners. "The stress on phonics with the ability to hear the words and sentences spoken as often as the child needs to hear them is helping many of my students with their English," Ms. Sanderson states. "The more proficient they are in English, the easier it is for them to master the appropriate skills."

Daily Use Builds Skill Mastery

Ms. Sanderson's students use the LeapTrack system books and skill cards on the LeapPad units every day when they come in from outside activities. "The children look forward to their 'LeapFrog' time, and because it engages their attention, it makes a good transition from outdoor to indoor activities," she said. Ms. Sanderson also finds that the activities reinforce the core curriculum and are complementary to both the reading and math programs used in her school. Although the amount of time the students use the LeapTrack system varies day-to-day depending on other activities, they use the program materials daily.

"With the audio support of the headphones, every child can be working on material that is appropriate for his skill level, but still working on the same type of activity at the same time as the other students, giving him a sense of belonging to the group," Ms. Sanderson reports.

“That gives me the time and opportunity to work with the children who most need individual attention.”

Useful Reporting Capabilities

Ms. Sanderson finds the reports to be extremely beneficial when communicating with families about students’ progress—even including copies of reports in student report cards. “The reports are an easy way for me to monitor a student’s progress,” says Ms. Sanderson. “With so much emphasis on achieving state standards, the LeapTrack™ system reports are another tool to help us ensure that all students are moving toward the final goal of skill mastery. They are also a great way to acknowledge a student’s progress and accomplishments along the way.”

A Student Success Plan

“If I had begun my teaching career in kindergarten, I doubt I would still be teaching today,” Ms. Sanderson states, “and I certainly don’t think I would know how to cope with a new class every year with such a diversity of skills and experience.” After forty years of teaching, like most experienced teachers, she can quickly determine if a learning tool does what it says it can.

“Because the LeapTrack program treats every student as an individual, it helps each child develop his potential in his own time,” she says. “With 22 students, there is not enough time in the day for me to give each child enough individual attention to cover the skills they missed in preschool and to get them up to the rest of the class in time to acquire the skills they need to master by the end of kindergarten.”

As an experienced teacher, Ms. Sanderson is not afraid to say she can’t do it all alone. “I have a reputation for being tough,” she says, “but the kids know that I love them and they are willing to work hard for me. My classroom is busy and full of lots of things to help children learn, but the LeapTrack system is almost like having another teacher in the classroom. It’s going to help get my students where they need to be by the end of the year.”

ABOUT US: LeapFrog SchoolHouse offers research-based programs designed specifically for the classroom. We publish PreK–Grade 8 curriculum and assessment content that is correlated to state standards and enhanced by our unique electronic learning platforms.

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- Assessment and Instruction
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- Special Education
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