



# LeapTrack™

Assessment & Instruction System



*Cheney Elementary School  
Orlando, Florida*

## **LeapTrack Assessment & Instruction System Creates Individualized Learning Paths for Cheney Elementary School Students**

In March 2001, when Lorie Lee, Cheney Elementary's technology coordinator, previewed the LeapTrack Assessment & Instruction System from LeapFrog SchoolHouse during the Florida Educational Technology Conference (FETC), she instantly saw that the program could provide the type of individual student assessment and standards-based instruction that Cheney's students needed.

Faced with meeting the needs of a transient K-5 student body with a range of English proficiency and other skill deficits, Cheney's teachers were looking for an accessible technology that would help them better prepare students to master Sunshine State Standards. With 50% of the student body moving each year, Cheney's test scores in math, reading, and writing were dramatically impacted by the fluctuating student population and lack of consistent instruction. Ms. Lee immediately knew that the LeapTrack system would "help our teachers be more productive" since it allows teachers to work with individual students or small groups "knowing that the other children are engaged in material that is appropriate for their level."

### **LeapTrack Assessment & Instruction System**

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

Using a straightforward, three-step instructional process of Assess-Report-Prescribe, the LeapTrack™ system can strengthen any core curriculum. It enables teachers to quickly assess all their students in reading, language arts, and math. The program then generates reports for administrators, teachers, and parents to translate student performance into state standards that the student has "missed" or "mastered." Lastly, it allows the teacher to produce an individualized learning path for each student in each curricular area.

### **Up and Running in Minutes**

The program couldn't have been easier to install Ms. Lee reports. "Our teachers installed the LeapTrack system on their PCs all by themselves. They didn't need to do anything other than take a CD-ROM and follow some directions, and it installed itself in about 10 minutes."

Receiving LeapTrack materials were Sarah McKee's second-grade classroom and Margie Martinez's third-grade classroom. Each classroom was equipped with 12 LeapPad® platforms and headphones; a LeapPort™ Cartridge Station; a box of assessment books; and a box of instructional materials, including Skill Cards and LeapPad Books.

Ms. McKee worked with her students in small groups to show them how the LeapPad platform worked. "I didn't have to show them more than once how to use the book, how to put the cartridge in, or how to use the headphones." In very short order, students learned the routine of picking up their cartridge and their assigned book or card, putting on the headphones with the LeapPad platform, and getting right to work. When they were finished, they knew where to return all the LeapTrack materials.

### **Assessment is Step One**

Florida teachers are required to indicate in their lesson plans which state standard is being taught or reinforced in each lesson. Because all of the LeapTrack assessments are tied to state standards, the teachers get an instant read on each student's proficiency prior to the state test, enabling teachers to better prepare each student for high-stakes testing.

The LeapTrack system's assessments track student progress and continually update the teacher on student achievement in relation to state standards. "The assessments are really beneficial," Mrs. Martinez says. "The part I like the most is that it's instant gratification. They do it; you put it in; you get a score," she continues. "In three seconds I had results of what 24 kids did."

Before she had access to information indicating which students had met specific standards, Ms. McKee says she had a difficult time individualizing instruction. "I had an idea, but it was more through observation and tests," she says. With the LeapTrack system, she has a much better understanding of which standards have been met and which haven't, saving her "a lot of time trying to remember what individual students have done."

And best of all, the results are based on Florida's standards. "You know it's nothing subjective," Mrs. Martinez says, "it's not how I think they're doing. These assessments are solely based on the standards so they're totally valid and reliable results."

### **Numerous Reports Inform Instruction Process**

One of the key features of the LeapTrack™ system is its report functionality. The system's reports include specific state standards the student has and has not met, and a student learning path that prescribes books and skill cards for each student according to their individual assessment results. There are also class reports that pinpoint discrete skills that the majority of a class needs to further improve.

"I think the reports are really useful," Mrs. Martinez says. As soon as she does an assessment and uploads the students' work, she can see the results on the computer screen. "I automatically know where everybody is."

Ms. McKee has also found the reports to be extremely useful. "All you need to do is click onto a particular report type, the subject and the student, and then generate an individual report," she continues. "It tells you the score, how many questions were answered correctly and incorrectly, and how long they spent on an assessment." The reports also show the recommended learning path "so you can see the different cards or books that [a student] needs to work on." She says another report she uses often is the class-average report, which indicates how her entire class is performing relative to the standards. "This is extremely helpful," she adds, since it helps her to know "which standards I need to focus more on when I pull small groups together or work with individuals."

### **Prescriptive Capability Leads to Individualized Learning Path**

The LeapTrack system allows teachers to diagnose individual student performance and prescribe standards-based content that meets each student's unique learning needs. "The student learning path is an excellent tool for individualizing work because it prescribes the books and cards that a student needs," Ms. McKee says. "So if I have a student who is struggling with a certain skill—Maybe struggling with recognizing setting—then that student is going to be assigned a skill card that will help him focus on recognizing the setting. Or if I have a student who is having trouble understanding the main idea and details, then that student will get a skill card focused on that specific skill."

Prior to using the LeapTrack system, Mrs. Martinez says she worried about her students reading comprehension skills. Many of her students could read third-grade material "but they couldn't answer questions when they were asked." But after three rounds of assessments, she's seen the improvements. "I know that it has really helped some of them get the comprehension part of reading, which I consider to be the most important part because if you can't understand what you read, you've just wasted your time."

## Daily Use Generates Immediate Results

Both teachers use LeapTrack materials twice a day—in the morning for reading and in the afternoon for math. Ms. McKee and Mrs. Martinez report that using the LeapTrack system's prescriptive content in their reading and math learning centers allows them time to work with other students in small groups and has made classroom management much easier. "The kids love it. They are so happy to be learning," said Ms. McKee. "It has changed my classroom in such a positive way. The LeapTrack books and cartridges guide the children through the prescriptive activities allowing them to start and finish on their own."

## School Abuzz with Success

Cheney Elementary is abuzz with the success of the LeapTrack system and the school's other teachers are quite anxious to have their classrooms outfitted as well.

"The LeapTrack system helps a lot with individualizing instruction," Mrs. Martinez says. "You know exactly where each child is and what they need to work on. It does it all," she says. Using the LeapTrack system has helped prepare her students for the FCAT and "everything that they need to accomplish in the third grade."

Ms. McKee sees additional benefits for Cheney's poor and mobile families. "It's something the children can take home with them," she says. "A lot of kids don't have computers at home so this is a way to get technology into the home."

Ms. Lee concurs that the LeapTrack system has made substantive changes at Cheney. "Having immediate reporting after each assessment allows the teachers to customize instruction for each student in a way that was not achievable before," she says, "and the kids absolutely love it. It's a joy to see."



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