

Fall/Winter, 2023



SMANTIX!

An exclusive publication from the ant on apple people at

VoWac[®] Publishing Company

Focusing on test scores

English/Language Arts drives it all

Do we lend too much credence to state-wide testing results? Is it a single prong approach in determining a student's level of success? Is it fair and does it provide an accurate picture?

We need to keep in mind that the testing being done is just a snap-shot of how a child performed on the day he tested. But there's a bit more to it than that. It does provide us with a pretty good idea of how a child is performing overall....but still only a snapshot.

The amount of time invested in the testing forces us to accept a certain level of validity. Since the passage of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2015 and its follow-up, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), students take an average of about 110 standardized tests between Pre-K and grade 12.

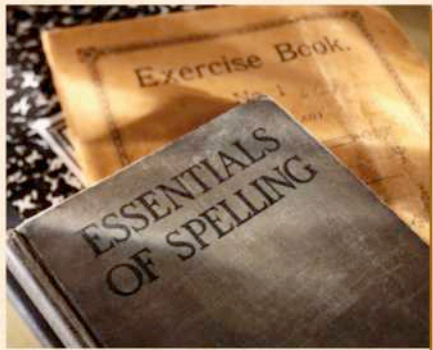
That being said, the infamous Joey Tribbiani (*Matt LeBlanc - Friends*) question arises, "How you doin'?" Seriously, How is your school performing? Are the same students performing at a high level consistently outperforming the target students we need to assist most? When it comes right down to it, test scores matter.

There isn't a magic number that is acceptable; rather an arbitrary score or percentile that any certain district considers acceptable. Most of these numbers are driven by what state level departments and offices of public instruction determine as "proficient" vs. "nonproficient".

When VoWac[®] looks into a school's ELA report card, (Over several years - not just one year.) we can glean a plethora of information giving us a rather clear interpretation of a district's needs. The snapshot prompts VoWac to reach out to the schools with a high percentage of students performing below proficient levels in the ELA category. That percentage number typically falls in the 60% or less. Let's face it. If 4 out of 10 students in your district are near proficient or below in the ELA portion of testing, your school may well be on the path, if not already, to a school wide improvement plan. The need for such a plan → → → → → **Continued on page 2 - Test Scores**



HOW YOU
D.O.I.N.?



ORTON-GILLINGHAM methods & practices that bring scores up

VoWac[®] skills and spelling have been used by schools across the United States for 40 years. The lessons are designed for ease of use and offer step-by-step strategies that make this approach one of the most effective means to address dyslexic students.

Since this method works so well for dyslexics - imagine what it will do to boost the skill sets of your other student population!

Need more reasons to consider VoWac[®]? Take a look at your students' standardized scores over the last 3 - 5 years. We can help you make a difference.

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isn't always a welcome one. It most certainly forces a school to look at every aspect within its walls.

When VoWac® views test results, we don't think that kids in one district are any smarter than in another district. We don't believe that the quality of instruction creates a huge variable. Although both of these things "could" be a contributing factor.

VoWac's pilot a program offers free use of teaching materials AND free workbooks so you make an informed decision about which curriculum choices are working for you and where some possible changes need to be made.

What we do consider a viable factor is the curriculum in place. If a school is using a reading/language arts curriculum that fails to teach for mastery, it will have a negative effect on student scores.

We recognize that there are a group of students (Studies show that number to be about 5 - 7%) that will excel no matter what the curriculum nor who the teacher is. This group of kids will learn whether the teacher shows up for school or not. To be honest, VoWac isn't too worried about this group, although schools do have to work a bit harder to challenge them

If student profile and the quality of teacher is on an even playing field, then curriculum choice should be the next best filter to consider for making a change.

Path to student improvement from VoWac®

Word attack skills are one of the most essential skill sets needed for a student to reach a proficient level of performance. Word attack skills have a direct correlation on the "famous five" components of reading: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These five aspects work together to create the reading experience. As children learn to read, they must develop skills in all of these areas in order to become successful readers.

Do you recall that 5 - 7% group? They have easily acquired these skills. We don't question it - we simply accept it. There is another group that make up roughly 55 - 60% of the student population. They have a wide range of skill sets that need both formal and informal instruction. This group of kids will strive showing various levels of success depending on the content area. This is the "middle of the road" group....the students typically targeted within the lesson plans of most teachers.

The bottom 40th percentile definitely needs our immediate attention. The students need a very structured presentation of the English language. The mechanics and construction of our language (how and why words are spelled and pronounced a certain way) is something these students need to build the skill sets needed to become proficient in the ELA content area.

What VoWac® have discovered within the test data of South Dakota schools is that those using VoWac® and those schools returning to VoWac® after dropping it, have typically seen higher scores than the state average and higher scores within other schools of the same approximate size.

So let's go back to Joey Tribbiani....."How you doin'?" If you're the administrator of a school that has ELA scores on that 60% range or lower....are you happy with that? VoWac® can help. VoWac has been focusing on this very concern for 40 years. The new catch phrase is "Science of reading". VoWac® has been in on the science of reading long before science of reading was even a thing. It's all we've done for four decades.

An easy challenge for ELA concerns

VoWac® offers a pilot program that allows us to loan your school at least two teacher kits...AND....VoWac® will also supply free workbooks for those classrooms. Assess your students after using VoWac® for an entire school year. If the scores are high it stands to reason that VoWac® had a part to play in those high scores. Take the challenge. If VoWac® gives you better results compared to your existing skills program, then buy VoWac®. If you're not happy with the results, simply return the teaching materials at the end of your pilot - no questions asked. Contact the VoWac® office for complete details - 866 • 598 • 6922.

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7 myths about ADHD

Attention deficit disorder first appeared in medical literature in the early 1900's as hyperkinetic reaction of childhood. It wasn't until the 1960's that it was formally recognized as "attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity." Despite the many long decades of research, ADHD is still widely misunderstood and misrepresented. Let's debunk some of the commonplace notions of ADHD with these 7 common myths.

1. MYTH → ADHD isn't real.

FACT → ADHD is recognized by the National Institutes of Health, the CDC, and the U.S. Department of Education. The American Psychiatric Association lists ADHD in the DSM-V — the official mental health "bible" used by psychologists and psychiatrists. ADHD is biologically based; research clearly links it to a neurotransmitter imbalance in the brain.

2. MYTH → Accommodations give kids with ADHD an unfair advantage.

FACT → The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that public schools address the special needs of all children with disabilities, including those with ADHD.

Special accommodations, such as extra time on tests, simply level the playing field so that students with ADHD can learn as successfully as their classmates do.

3. MYTH → Children with ADHD eventually outgrow their condition.

FACT → Research shows that as many as two-thirds of children with ADHD will continue to struggle with symptoms in adulthood. Though roughly 4 percent of the adult population has ADHD, the majority remains undiagnosed — and untreated.

4. ↓ MYTH ADHD only affects boys.

FACT → Girls are just as likely to have ADHD as are boys, and may show either hyperactive or inattentive symptoms. But because this myth persists, boys are still more likely to be diagnosed than are girls.

5. MYTH → ADHD is the result of bad parenting.

FACT → ADHD symptoms — like blurting out or fidgeting — are rooted in brain chemistry, not discipline. In fact, research shows that overly strict parenting practices can actually exacerbate ADHD symptoms!

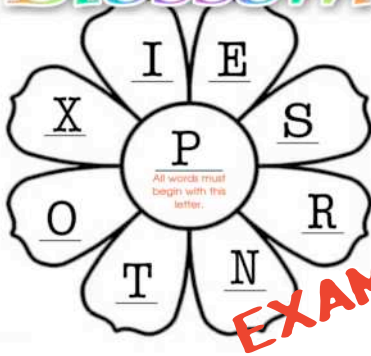
6. MYTH → Children who take ADHD medication are more likely to abuse drugs.

FACT → Studies show that having untreated ADHD increases an individual's risk of abusing drugs or alcohol. Appropriate treatment reduces this risk, and the medications used to treat ADHD have been proven safe and effective over more than 50 years.

7. MYTH → People who have ADHD never amount to anything.

FACT → The list of high-achieving people with ADHD today includes David Neeleman, founder of JetBlue, and entertainers Justin Timberlake and Adam Levine, among others. Historical icons thought to have had ADHD include Mozart, Abraham Lincoln, and Salvador Dali.

Blossom



EXAMPLE

(10 pts) pensions (5 pts) posters

(10 pts) pointers (3 pts) pores

(10 pts) pretense (5 pts) printed

(5 pts) printed (3 pts) point

(5 pts) pistons (5 pts) presses

Download this template
at WWW.VOWAC.COM

WORDSMITHING FOR OLDER STUDENTS

Yes...older students (4th and up) enjoy word games; especially those that let them demonstrate their word prowess. BLOSSOMS is a great game to use as a sponge activity and will work well for the reluctant student that may be unsure of himself.

The game sheet can be downloaded from our website, www.vowac.com. Click on "RESOURCES" and a drop down menu will give you "GAMES" as an option. You can also visit VoWac's Facebook page and access the template from our posts. The direction for play is also at both locations.

Students will acquire various strategies by adding prefixes and suffixes in creating lengthy words - some usable in day-to-day communication - some, maybe not. Either way, this will get their brains moving in a vocabulary building direction.

This could easily become an excellent teacher tool to help master vocabulary in specific content areas. I.E., have students come up with words associated with a specific part of your curriculum.

Play is simple. Roll a couple of 30-sided letter dice. Fill in the spaces with letters and tally your score. In the example (←← left), 61 points were scored. Discuss the words your students create: Could they have added affixes to make longer words? Any variant spellings? Discuss definitions, parts of speech, and context.

Most of all - have some fun. After you've played a few rounds, contact us at VoWac. We want to hear about your experience.

30-sided letter dice (single, pairs & class packs) are available at VoWac. Good luck!

"IT" is in the igloo



These two first graders from White Lake Elementary had some clever guesses about what was in the igloo. It seems that a bear and a penguin are what's behind the growling noises coming from within.

Thank you Mrs Ethington for participating in VoWac's "IT is in the igloo" contest.

LEADERSHIP POSITION AVAILABLE

Have you given any thought to doing something else other than being directly in a school setting?

This opportunity may be just what you've been wanting. VoWac is seeking a dynamic educator that would like to exit the school setting but would still like to be directly involved with schools.

VoWac is offering a management position to actually run the day-to-day operation of the company. BE THE BOSS!

This position could very well turn into one that leads to ownership of the company. Salary and benefits are competitive.

If you are interested or know someone that might be a good candidate for this position, please have them contact the VoWac offices.

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