ROBOKIND PHONICS

PHONICS FOCUS GROUP - APRIL 2023

ABSTRACT

This paper evaluates the impact of the RoboKind Phonics Beta program on early childhood reading education in special education classrooms across six different schools. The program, which uses a humanoid robot and a multi-sensory approach, was implemented over four weeks. The results showed significant improvements in students' reading skills and attitudes towards reading. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) scores improved, with Correct Letter Sound (CLS) scores increasing from a pre-median of 42.5 to a post-median of 138, and Whole Words Read (WWR) scores increasing from a pre-median of 11 to a post-median of 46.5. Teacher-reported student engagement rates increased from 70% to 95%, and student self-reported engagement increased from the 71st percentile to the 85th percentile. The study highlights the potential of innovative, research-based programs like RoboKind Phonics to improve early childhood reading education, particularly in special education classrooms.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper examines the significant improvements in early childhood reading education achieved through the implementation of the RoboKind Phonics Beta program in six different schools across various states.

The results of the program were promising. Students' DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) Correct Letter Sound (CLS) scores improved from a pre-median of 42.5 to a post-median of 138, signifying that students were able to recognize 96 more letter sounds within one minute after using RoboKind Phonics for four weeks. The DIBELS Whole Words Read (WWR) scores also showed improvement, with a pre-median score of 11 increasing to a post-median score of 46.5, indicating that students were able to read 35 more words within one minute after the program.

Furthermore, teacher-reported student engagement rates went up in all four case studies, from 70% with the previous phonics curriculum to 95% with RoboKind Phonics. Student self-reported engagement also increased, from the 71st percentile before starting RoboKind Phonics to the 85th percentile after.

Several students showed significant improvement after participating in the program. For instance, one student who initially had severe behavioral issues was able to transition to a full-day schedule after working with the program. His tantruming and aggression decreased, and he was able to self-regulate his emotions. He also improved his reading skills, moving from following along with a story being read to him to reading some books independently.

Teachers participating in the focus groups shared their positive experiences with the program. As Casey Hutton from South Ripley stated, "I'm really enjoying it! I can see this working for many of our SPED and general education students!" Fannie Penick from Deer Park ISD added, "I am really enjoying using this program in my classroom it has become a part of our day and the students ask me when is it time to read :)"

The RoboKind Phonics Beta program is a unique, play-based, explicit, and systematic phonics program aligned with the Science of Reading. It uses a humanoid robot to provide an engaging learning experience, stimulating multiple sensory modalities by combining interactive technology with visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile learning materials. The program was implemented over four weeks, covering eleven lessons, with comprehensive training for facilitators that included a live distance training session and access to an archive of professional learning support videos.

The implementation of the RoboKind Phonics Beta program provided valuable lessons for the schools, highlighting the potential of innovative, research-based programs to improve early childhood reading education, particularly in special education classrooms. The positive outcomes and feedback from the program led to recommendations for its wider use, demonstrating its potential for a broader impact on early childhood reading education.

ROBOKIND PHONICS

Learn more about RoboKind Phonics at RoboKind.com/Phonics

@Robokind