

Educator Study with ACHIEVE Read & Practice 2018-01



CONTEXT: Psychology course, delivered face-to-face, to 25 students

PRODUCT USED: The Developing Person through the Lifespan 10th Edition; Kathleen Berger (eBook) with ACHIEVE Read & Practice

STUDY DESIGN: Mixed methods with descriptive and correlational analyses

How ACHIEVE Read & Practice supports positive student success and positive study behaviors at the Community College of Rhode Island

Institutional and course context

Rhode Island Community College is a public community college in New England. At present, 18,000 students are enrolled across a considerable diversity in ages, cultures, and experiences. 62 percent of the student body are women, 70 percent are part-time, 38 percent are from an ethnic minority group, and 60 percent are 25 years or older. This study was conducted in a Psychology course that is taught face-to-face on campus and had 25 students enrolled. The instructor has more than 15 years of experience teaching Psychology and has previously used digital technology.

Instructor implementation

This instructor replaced the digital learning tool they had been using with ACHIEVE Read & Practice. The instructor chose to assign regular activities and require that students complete them. Performance made up 10% of a student's overall course grade. Students were able to retake the quizzes but retaking quizzes did not count toward their performance score.

Course Goals and Challenges

In previous sections of this course that this instructor taught they found it very challenging to find methods for motivating students to remain engaged, keeping students on track with assigned reading, and supporting students to develop stronger study habits. They also found that it was very challenging to correctly identify the specific students in the class who were struggling or falling behind in the reading. This instructor had previously used a digital learning tool in the classroom and they found setting up the tool and managing the tool was complex, time consuming, and difficult to use.

“ACHIEVE Read & Practice provides a structure for staying current with assigned text reading and allows students to check their progress in understanding and retrieving the information they need to learn, thereby encouraging the use of assessment feedback to customize learning objectives”, instructor

Study Design

This study examined whether the use of ACHIEVE Read & Practice influenced student preparedness for class, engagement and retention, and overall academic performance. Surveys that were refined during pilot tests were deployed to instructors and students at the start and end of the course, instructors kept weekly logs of implementation and perceptions, a protocol for observing the classroom was used on site visits (adapted from Lane & Harris, 2005), an instructor interview protocol and student focus group protocol were implemented. Protocols were followed for interviewing the instructor and managing a focus group with students. Product

usage data, self-reported prior academic performance data, and records of current academic performance data were collected. Data were matched across sources and descriptive and correlational analyses were conducted.

Results

The majority of students in the course remained engaged in ACHIEVE Read & Practice. This instructor assigned 46 required activities over the course of the semester. The average completion rate across all activities was 81% and there was an average persistence rate of 95%. Only two students stopped engaging with the product about half way through the semester and three others did not complete the final two assignments.

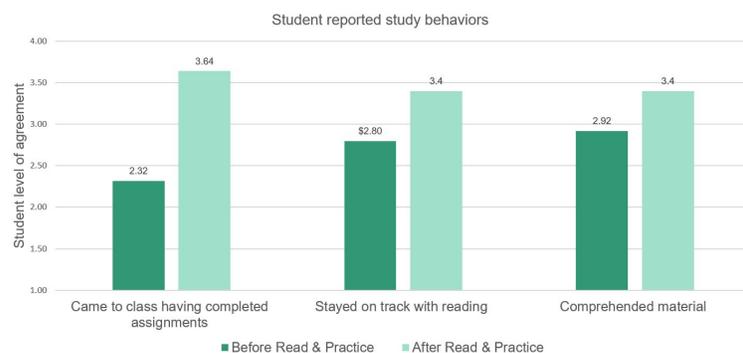
Students' use of Read & Practice was related to better course preparedness and engagement. Prior to using Read & Practice, 40% of students indicated that they rarely came to class prepared to participate and at the end of the course, 80% of that subset indicated that they always came to class having completed the reading. Similarly, 74% of students who indicated that they rarely or never stayed on track with the reading, reported that they always did after using Read & Practice.

“Read & Practice made it much easier to do the reading, so I didn't mind finishing the assignments”, student

Students' use of Read & Practice was related to better overall academic performance in the course. The higher students' overall performance was in their Read & Practice activities, the higher they reported that their overall course grade, and this trend persisted when their high-school GPA was accounted for.. This was likely influenced by 79% of students strongly agreeing that Read & Practice reinforced the main concepts of their instructors' lecture and 76% strongly agreed that the tool motivated them to continually practice, and 75% strongly agreed that Read & Practice helped them develop stronger study habits.

Retaking quizzes in Read & Practice supported overall academic performance after accounting for prior academic performance. Students who retake quizzes reported performing better in their course than students who did not. Overall, students who retake quizzes reported an average course score of 90-100%, while students who did not retake quizzes reported earning between an 80-90%. This trend persisted when taking prior academic performance into consideration.

Use of Read & Practice Analytics positively influenced this instructor's ability to track student performance and support students who were falling behind. Each week during this study the instructor reported accessing the analytics in Aead & Practice and using the insights gleaned to support students who were falling behind. They noted on multiple occasions that using the analytics was the greatest instructor benefit of Read & Practice. They also noted that if they had not had access to these insights, they would not have identified students needing help, not intervened, and not been able to get them back on track.



Insights for Optimization

Instructor and student reactions and results were analyzed for insights into how the product could be further improved. The instructor provided insightful feedback on how the analytics could be further improved to make the insights more intuitive.. The feedback was further researched by the User Experience and Design teams and implemented in another iteration of the product.

Insights for Instructors

In the study of this course, one of the critical findings was that students who retake quizzes achieve higher scores in the class. It is interesting that, even though not assigned, students elected to retake quizzes. Given the positive relationship between retaking quizzes and course performance, instructors may consider offering extra-credit for retaking quizzes.

Notes

Although the data were rich and the findings important for product optimization and insights for instructors, they are specific to this course and cannot be generalized to the target population. Also, the results are descriptive and correlational and cannot be used to infer causation.