



About the School:		About the Students:	
Grades:	K-5	African American:	3%
Number of Students:	1577	Caucasian:	73%
Test(s):	FCAT	Hispanic:	17%
Reduced Price Lunch:	21%	Asian:	1%
		Other:	6%
		ELL:	4%



Reading Mastery Helps Florida Students Advance Two Grade Levels in Reading

How can the majority of Gulf Elementary School students in Grades K-5 go from reading below grade level in the mid-1990s to reading above grade level by 2004? Many teachers are crediting SRA/McGraw-Hill's Direct Instruction programs, *Reading Mastery* and *Reading Mastery Plus*.

Because students were going through the motions of reading in the mid-1990s, but their test scores were not improving, teachers implemented Direct Instruction during the 1996-1997 school year in Grades 1-5. According to Rob Stratton, curriculum and technology specialist, students were reading one or more years below grade level before Direct Instruction was adopted.

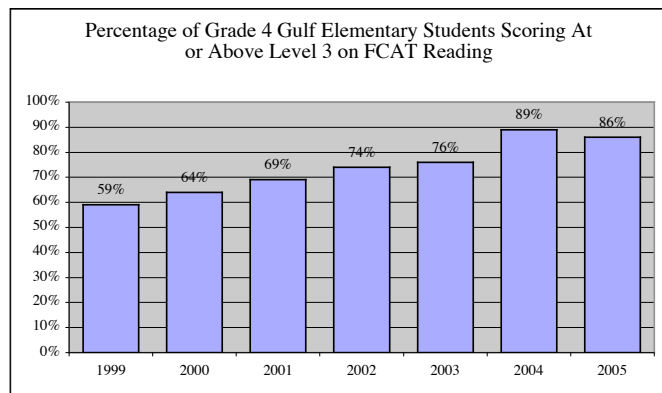
Stratton said the use of Direct Instruction began in resource rooms, where special education students are combined with students following the general curriculum. "We found that the special education children were learning to read and that the regular education students were greatly improving their reading," he explained. "We added *Reading Mastery* to Kindergarten the following year."

Moving to Reading Mastery Plus

Every year since the adoption of Direct Instruction, Gulf Elementary School students have progressively improved their reading skills. "Our low-end reading groups are getting smaller, and our high-end groups are getting larger," he said. "Now we use a mix of *Reading Mastery* and *Reading Mastery Plus* in Grades K-1 and *Reading Mastery Plus* in Grades 2-5."

Reading Mastery Plus provides students with the skills and explicit instruction needed to master the fundamentals of reading with oral language, phonemic awareness, and systematic phonics.

In addition to reading above grade level, students demonstrate increased scores overall on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The FCAT includes five achievement levels, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. The percentage of Grade 4 students scoring at or above level 3 on the reading portion of the FCAT went from 59% in 1999 to 86% by 2005.





What Teachers Are Saying

“Our teachers love *Reading Mastery Plus*,” Stratton said. “We know we can meet children’s needs, regardless of where they are. If we work with students who are learning English for the first time, we put them into a Fast Cycle group to learn basic sounds. This way we meet their needs immediately.”

Stratton said educators at Gulf Elementary School are thrilled with the overall improvement. “We’re even raising the bar in the primary grades. Now, some Kindergartners are moving into Level 1 of *Reading Mastery Plus* and some Grade 2 students are moving toward Level 2 of *Reading Mastery Plus*. By Grade 2, our students amaze us with their reading abilities.”

About Gulf Elementary School

Located about 100 miles south of Sarasota, Gulf Elementary School serves more than 1,500 students in the Lee County School District: 73% Caucasian, 17% Hispanic, 6% multicultural, 3% African American, and 1% Asian. Twenty-one percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and 4% are English Language Learners (ELL). For more information about Gulf Elementary School, visit www.lee.k12.fl.us/schools/gfe.

For More Information

If you would like to learn more about success with Direct Instruction programs in your school or district, please contact us today at **1-888-SRA-4543**.