



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Expands Cogmed Working Memory Training

If someone gives you several directions at one time, and a few minutes later you can only remember one, you're not alone.

"As we look at evaluation data on our students, one of the most significant findings is working memory deficit," said Dr. Tom Kelchner, director of special education in Goose Creek CISD. "Working memory deficit affects the processing of reading and math, attention, and other areas as well as behavior."

Sarah Chase, campus special education services coordinator, explained that working memory helps us to organize our thoughts and to remember.

"In an academic setting, remembering the teacher's directions is an example of working memory. In math, it might involve remembering steps in a problem," said Chase. "In the home setting, it could be a child remembering a mother's directions about getting dressed."

After piloting the Cogmed Working Memory Training last summer at several summer school locations, Goose Creek CISD expanded the program to provide training to 670 special and regular education students, including large groups of students on the elementary campuses of David Crockett and Dr. Johnny T. Clark, Jr. The computer-based program, which seems like a challenging game to students, takes 35 minutes three days a week for 30 days. A designated, trained coach on each campus supervises the program. The Cogmed coaches are Charol Malek at Crockett Elementary, Andrea Dwyer at Hopper Primary, Ann Garrett at Clark Elementary and Stephan Aguero at Highlands Junior School.

"Scheduling is the hardest part," said Susan Griffin, principal of Clark Elementary. "Ann Garrett was a huge part of the success of the program. She was diligent about making sure the students attended and made up sessions they missed."

Garrett tried to schedule students in the computer lab before and after school, but if the students did not have time in their schedules or did not have transportation, they went to the lab during class.

"We are expanding this program beyond special education as an option for RTI (Response to Intervention), making it available for any student who needs it. Since it is prescriptive, it is not for every student," said Kelchner.



Dennis McLynn, director of marketing for Pearson New Business Innovation, interviews Dr. Tom Kelchner, Goose Creek CISD's director of special education, about the success of the Cogmed program for an informational video.

Response to Intervention is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs who are experiencing difficulty in the classroom. Since Cogmed helps build short term working memory, the program could provide remediation so that the child might not have to go through further evaluation.

"All our data indicates that where students were able to access the program and the program was implemented with fidelity over the prescribed period of time, individual student results were significant," said Kelchner.

Kelchner, Chase and Griffin, along with several teachers, parents and a student, were willing to express their feelings about the success they had observed as a result of the research-based program. They recently had the opportunity to participate in an informational video about Cogmed Working Memory Training that will initially be distributed to Cogmed providers in Australia.

"My son began to enjoy going to school more," said Brandi Gonzalez. "He liked working at his own pace on the computer and getting incentives after he finished some activities. His organizational skills had been terrible, but they got better throughout the program. He even started turning in his work more often, and he really liked working with Mr. Aguero."

For the 2015-2016 school year, the program will expand to every elementary and junior school in Goose Creek, and each campus will have a trained Cogmed coach.

"Our expectation is that Cogmed will be a significant tool to support improved student achievement levels," said Kelchner.

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