



Success in a 1st Grade ESL Classroom

Early Literacy Case Study



Katie Bostian
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"I can't tell you how awesome this program is for phonics and reading!"

~ **Katie**



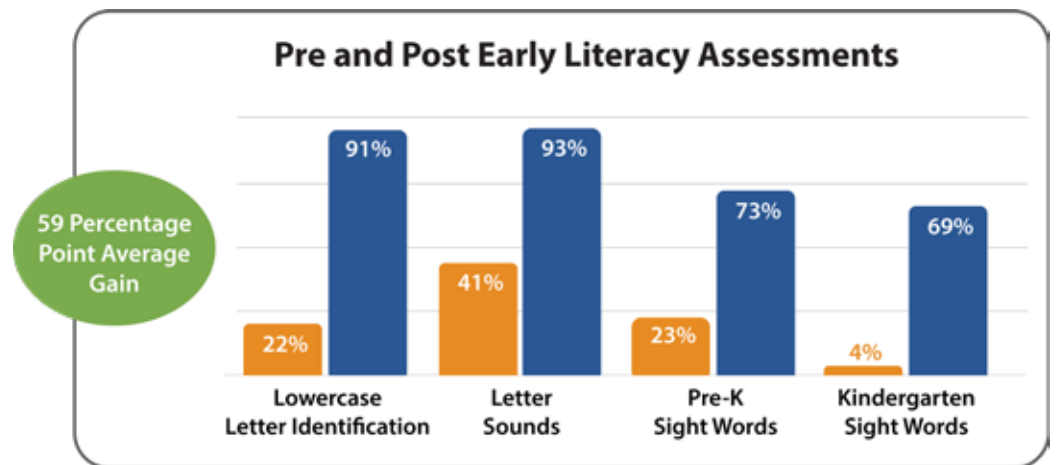
Details of Case Study

- 1st Grade ESL Students
- Two Small Groups
- Using Letters alive®
- 90-Day Study
- Growth over Baseline



Key Findings

- **Accelerated Growth Across All Measures**
Students demonstrated rapid gains in foundational literacy skills within a relatively short instructional period.
- **Consistency Across Groups**
Despite being separate groups, students showed similar patterns of improvement, suggesting the approach is reliable and replicable.
- **Balanced Instructional Model**
The combination of engagement (interactive technology) and structured literacy practices contributed to strong outcomes.



Data captured by ESGI.

Case Study Details

Overview

In a 1st grade ESL classroom, the teacher implemented **Letters alive®** to support foundational literacy development. The instructional approach combined **high student engagement** with **structured, explicit literacy instruction**, targeting key early reading skills including letter recognition, phonics, and sight word acquisition.

Participants

The intervention was conducted with **two small groups of ESL students**, allowing for targeted instruction and close progress monitoring. Despite differences between the groups, both demonstrated similar learning patterns and outcomes.

Instructional Focus

The supplemental early literacy program emphasized three core areas of literacy:

- Lowercase letter recognition
- Letter-sound (phonics) knowledge
- Sight word acquisition (PreK and Kindergarten levels)

The supplemental instruction integrated interactive, multisensory experiences with systematic skill progression, ensuring both engagement and skill mastery.



Case Study Highlights

3D Augmented Reality Drives Engagement and Sustains Instruction

Educational Note

When animals came to life in 3D, engagement was immediate. Students were eager to participate, speak, and interact with letters and sounds. For English learners, this created more opportunities to hear and use language. Because students were actively involved, they were able to stay engaged through repeated, structured lessons, giving them the practice needed to build foundational literacy skills. Each lesson followed a clear routine: introduce a letter and sound, model formation, and practice through writing, identification, and discussion.

From Interaction to Application: Building Language and Literacy

Educational Note

Students moved beyond recognizing letters and sounds to actively using them. They generated words, built word families, and created sentences using familiar vocabulary. Instruction progressed from foundational skills to more complex tasks, including sentence writing and short compositions. The 3D animals and letters provided meaningful context, helping students connect sounds, words, and ideas while developing both literacy and language skills.

Consistent, Measurable Growth Across Groups

Educational Note

Across two separate small groups, students demonstrated similar patterns of growth, reflecting a structured and repeatable instructional approach. This combination of active engagement, consistent instruction, and meaningful application led to strong, measurable gains in early literacy.

Case Study Findings

1. Letter Recognition

Students showed substantial improvement in identifying lowercase letters:
Increased from 22% to 91%

2. Letter-Sound Knowledge

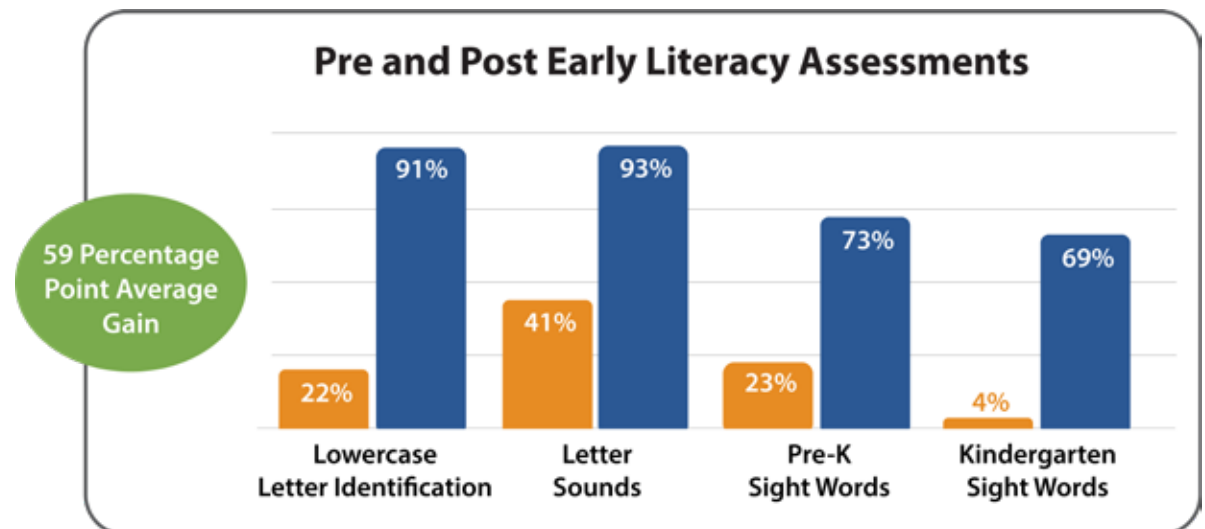
Phonics development improved significantly across both groups:
Grew from 35–47% to 89–97%

3. Pre-K Sight Word Knowledge

Students expanded their early word recognition:
Increased from 15–31% to 66–79%

4. Kindergarten Sight Word Recognition

Students made notable gains in more advanced sight word sets:
Improved from 4% to 69%



Data captured by ESGI.

Case Study Summary

Implications

This case study highlights the effectiveness of integrating engaging digital tools like **Letters alive**® with evidence-based literacy instruction in ESL settings. The consistent improvements across multiple skill areas suggest that this approach can:

- Support **diverse learners**, particularly English language learners
- **Accelerate early literacy development**
- Provide **scalable, repeatable results** across different student groups

“If you teach phonics, in any situation: pre-K, K, remediation, first grade, ESL, or primary, you need to check this out!”

Katie Bostian, ESL Teacher



Conclusion

The use of **Letters alive**® in this 1st grade ESL classroom resulted in **measurable, consistent gains** in essential early literacy skills. By combining interactive engagement with structured instruction, the teacher created an effective learning environment that significantly improved student outcomes in letter recognition, phonics, and sight word knowledge.



Resources Used

Letters alive® Kit - Supplemental Early Literacy Program

- Early literacy skills that come alive in 3D with Augmented Reality technology
- Zoo Keeper ABC Boot Camp™
- Animal a Week™ Lesson Plans
- Supports the Science of Reading
- Complements any curriculum

Journals alive™ - Interactive student journals

Powered by
**AUGMENTED
Reality**



To learn more about the resources used, connect with Stacy DeWerd, Chief Growth & Learning Officer.

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See Letters alive
in action!

