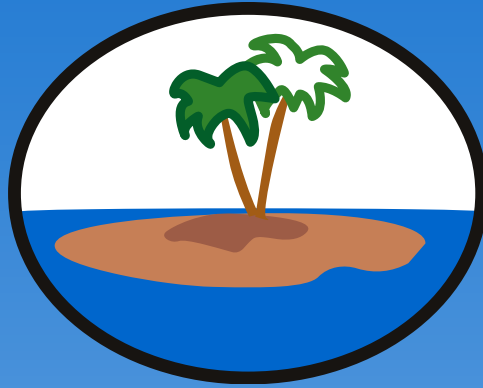


STUDY ISLAND



Study Island and No Child Left Behind: Solid Research Equals Solid Results



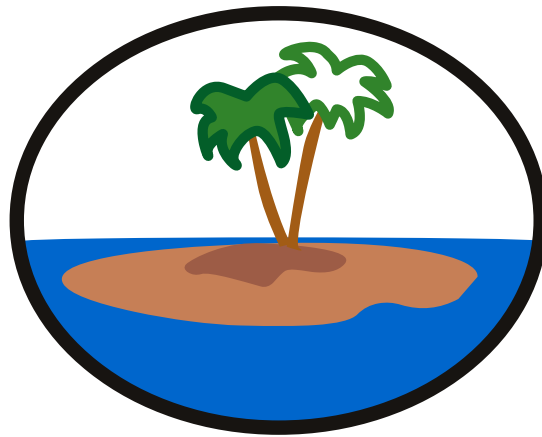
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Solid Research Equals Solid Results

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Study Island and No Child Left Behind

Stronger Accountability for Results

States are responsible for having strong academic standards for what every child should know and learn in reading, math, and science for elementary, middle and high schools. *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) requires states to administer tests that measure student proficiency with respect to the state's academic standards.

The Study Island program for your state is based solely on your state's academic standards. Study Island offers specific instruction, assessment, and diagnostics for each standard tested on your state assessments.

Study Island presents the student with standard-specific practice followed by immediate feedback and instruction. By focusing specifically on the skills outlined in the state standards in an assessment-like environment, Study Island reinforces and enhances student skills, increases student comfort with a high-stakes testing environment, and collects valuable data for diagnostic reports.

Study Island's diagnostic reports inform teachers of the strengths and weaknesses of each student. They also inform the teacher of what classroom topics need further emphasis. With this knowledge, teachers can craft lessons to ensure each student meets or exceeds state standards.

NCLB requires districts and schools to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), an individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. AYP sets the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year. NCLB raises the bar of expectations for all students, particularly those who are members of minority groups or otherwise disadvantaged and, therefore, are at a greater risk of being left behind.

The growing emphasis on assessment results and measurable, annual progress makes it critical for schools to have accurate information on where each student and student group stands with respect to the expectations of the state's standards. For many schools, this information is acquired in the form of the state's report card from the previous year's assessments. Unfortunately, the information in the state report card comes too late to aid in keeping student skills on grade level. With real-time, detailed reports that show progress by student (and student group) for each specific standard, Study Island provides schools with relevant data early enough to enable the school to act BEFORE the state assessments.

Like the NCLB Act, Study Island puts a special focus on doing what works. Our experience and research continues to guide us in offering a simple, straightforward program that 1) reinforces and enhances student skills through instruction, 2) increases student comfort with a high-stakes testing environment through assessment, and 3) measures student progress through diagnostic reports.



Study Island and No Child Left Behind

Parental Involvement

NCLB stresses parental involvement and choice. In some cases parents will be able to use federal education funds for what are called "supplemental education services." Those services include tutoring, after school services, and summer school programs.

Study Island provides parents a way to become involved in the assessment process as they assist their children in accessing the program from home and watching their progress. Accessible from any Internet connected computer, Study Island is available to students and parents after school and even over the summer. Study Island helps many parents understand for the first time how their children will be tested on the state standards. Bringing Study Island into the home encourages discussion of state standards and assessment success throughout the school year.

Concentrating Resources on Proven Education Methods

No Child Left Behind targets education dollars to research-based programs that have been proven most effective in helping children learn. NCLB puts a special focus on doing what works. It stresses the importance of selecting instructional approaches that have a proven track record. For too many years, schools have experimented with lessons and materials that have not produced their promised results.

Much of the research used in the development of the Study Island program focuses on the effectiveness of assessments as a learning tool. Research has indicated that ongoing assessments, which provide immediate feedback, can be highly effective learning tools as well as valuable diagnostic resources. Based on the research of the AAHE Assessment Forum and the Advancing Student Learning through Outcomes Assessment project of the University of Arizona, Study Island has established specific, research-based principles. These research principles are one of the primary guiding forces in the ongoing development of the Study Island program. Contact Study Island to receive more information on these research principles.



Study Island and No Child Left Behind

3 Keys to Study Island's success as a "program that works"

1) Singular focus on the specific state's standards

Unlike Study Island, many assessment and instructional programs take previously developed, general academic content and "align" it to your state's standards. Study Island is built from the ground up solely and specifically for your state's standards and assessments. Study Island does nothing but design and develop programs for state standards and criterion referenced tests. Our singular focus has been key to our staff's development of a high degree of expertise in the area of state standards and assessment.

2) Ease of use

Most teachers and students have had experiences with computerized educational programs that may look good on the surface, but prove to be too complicated and cumbersome to use effectively. Study Island's straight forward design makes it extremely user-friendly and its web-based format makes it accessible from any Internet connected computer. See the results of our user survey to learn what users say about how easy Study Island is to use. In addition to being very user-friendly for students and teachers, Study Island is very easy to set-up for your school. Since no software is installed on your local machines, Study Island requires no installation or maintenance effort on the part of the school's staff.

3) Reliance on user feedback

Study Island relies heavily on its schools and districts for direction in the ongoing development of the program. As a web-based program, Study Island undergoes continuous enhancement and improvement.

Enabled by the real-time, data-driven environment of Study Island, we constantly collect valuable user feedback and statistical data in order to guide the continuous improvement to the program. Static, PC-based software cannot use the pool of users as a continuous ground for research and development the way Study Island does.



Improved Learning Through Computerized Assessments and Real-Time Data

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Introduction

The Study Island program is a web-based assessment, instruction, and diagnostic program designed to assist students and teachers in their effort attain student mastery of the state standards. Much of the research used in the development of the program is research on the effectiveness of assessments as a learning tool. Research has indicated that ongoing assessments that provide immediate feedback can be highly effective learning tools as well as valuable diagnostic resources. Based on the research of the AAHE Assessment Forum and the Advancing Student Learning through Outcomes Assessment project of the University of Arizona, Study Island has established the eight principles detailed below. These research principles are one of the primary guiding forces in the ongoing development of the Study Island program.

Principle 1 - The assessment of student learning begins with a solid educational framework in the form of specific learning standards.

Each State Specific Study Island program is based solely on the standards for the given state. Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only what we choose to assess but also how we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.

Principle 2 - Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.

Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience. Study Island adds the performance element to classroom instruction. Students are not simply required to demonstrate that they can read words on a page, but that they can process what they have read and use the information in a meaningful way.

Principle 3 - Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.

Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations (state learning standards and standards-based assessments) and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a school toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful. For this reason, Study Island is focused solely on each state's curriculum standards.

Principle 4 - Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.

Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way -- about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Computerized, data-driven programs like Study Island help us understand which students learn best under what conditions. With such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning. Reliable, real-time performance data enables educators to see trends in performance which gives them the ability to adapt the learning environment in order to make it more effective.

Principle 5 - Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic.

Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, "one-shot" assessment can be better than none, improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. In the case of the Study Island program, this means tracking the process of individual students, and classes of students. Study Island tracks student performance with respect to each state standard. The point of this is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement.