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The power of one: One teacher's story of success

In 2012, Katelyn Hagen had a tough decision to make. Should she stay in her current position as a special education teacher at a middle school in Concord, North Carolina, or should she risk taking a new position that had been added to the staff roster? The new position was that of reading teacher. The job description was vague and provided no clear process for placing students in the class. Despite those shortcomings, Katelyn chose to accept the challenge and began a journey that would change her life as well as the lives of many students in her district. She had chosen to become one of the first *Xtreme Reading* teachers in North Carolina.

She dedicated herself to learning and mastering the *Xtreme Reading* program with Pam Leitzell and Jerri Neduchal as her coaches. Katelyn routinely worked to meticulously review her students' work and plan her daily lessons so that as she was learning the program, she would be well-prepared to provide accurate feedback to each student and move her classes along at a quick pace.

Katelyn took on the challenge to become the spokesperson for her school, developing data procedures to more effectively select interventions for students. Equally challenging were her students' low level of morale and motivation. It took patience, a lot of nurturing, and effective use of the ACHIEVE expectations and *Possible Selves* to redirect those negative feelings that her students had about learning. She helped students become self-empowered to see that they could attain what once seemed impossible: academic success.

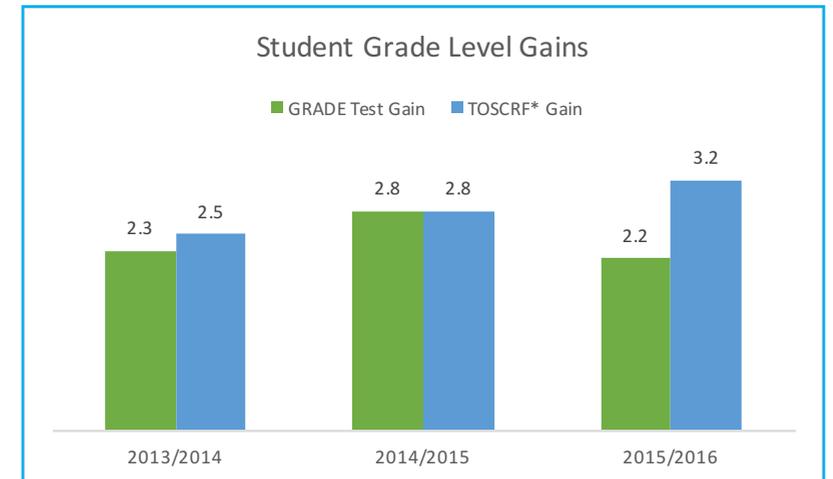
Without knowing it, Katelyn was building the most successful *Xtreme Reading* classroom in the state. Over the span of three years, each of her *Xtreme Reading* groups averaged more than two years of growth on reading assessments at the end of the one-year course. The results remained consistent over time; her students made great gains. And Katelyn gained too; she earned her Learning Strategies Professional Developer certification in 2015.

Seeing student improvement data can be motivating for a teacher, but Katelyn maintains that it was her personal relationships with students that inspired and propelled her daily. One of her most memorable stories involved one of her eighth-grade students who entered her class with a fifth-grade reading level and had never passed the yearly state reading assessment. When the eighth-grade test scores came in at the end of the year, not only had this student attained an incredible growth point on the reading test, she passed the state assessment for the first time ever!

According to Katelyn, "*Xtreme Reading* helped me achieve things with my students that I never thought possible." Most importantly, she said that the program allowed her students to achieve things that they never thought they would achieve. "It is great to see the light bulbs go on for kids, and they finally understand how to tackle learning." One decision by one dedicated teacher can result in one huge success story for kids. That is truly the power of one!

Pam Leitzell
Educational Consultant
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Xtreme Reading, a supplemental reading program designed to teach struggling adolescents scoring from the 2nd to 5th grade reading levels, was cited as having **STRONG** evidence on the new Evidence for ESSA website: evidenceforessa.org



*Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency



Katelyn Hagen