iPads as a Study & Learning Tool
2012-2013

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Introduction:

The grade 6/7B group is struggling with tests. Though concerned about tests, the way they approach test reparation seems to be ineffective. This is because they cannot identify key concepts within the material presented. This literally means that, as far they are concerned, everything is important and so they try to study everything. They do not seem to be able to make notes and study from them. In other words, these students need to acquire note taking and test taking skills.

Goal:

The goal of this project is to provide students with a tool that allows them to make study notes so that they can they study the curriculum goals covered as well as the other concepts presented in class. The desired outcome is an increase in student achievement as demonstrated through an increase in test scores.

Strategies:

Use of iPads to generate keynote presentations. Each student will create his/her own Keynote presentation at the beginning of each unit and added to it at the end of each class. This will be their study notes and guide, a collection of key concepts covered in each class within each curriculum goal for each unit. This will be paired with teacher directed pre and post test reviews to clarify expectations and instructions and as a review of test taking strategies.

Data Collection Tools:

Engagement checklists
Test scores

Grade 6/7B Test Taking & Study Skills
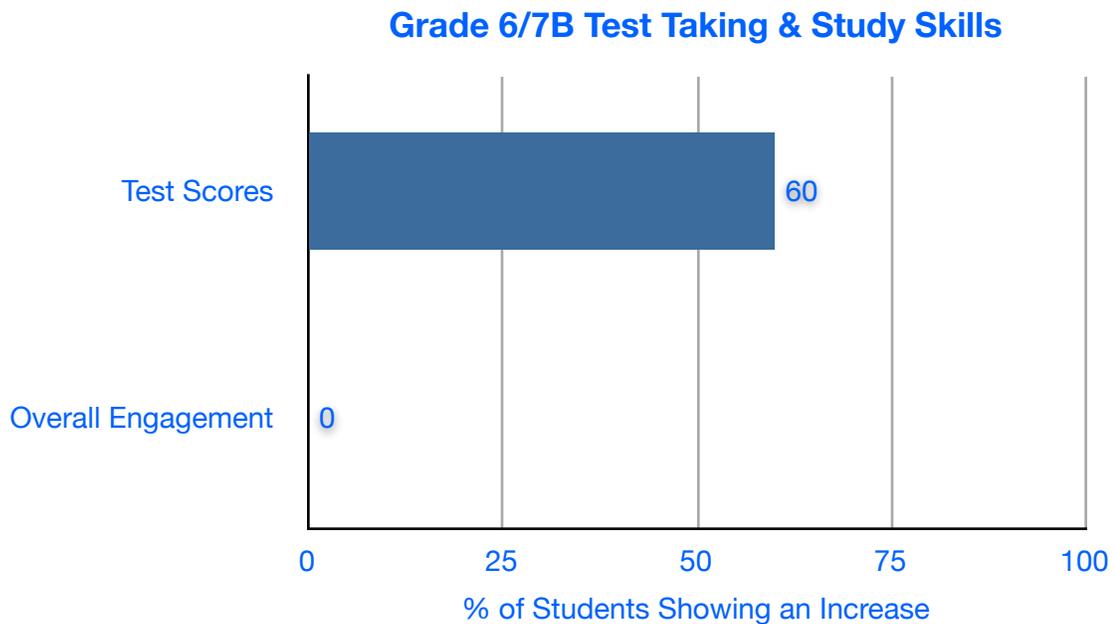
Figure 1. This figure clearly indicates an increase in the students' test scores which can be directly attributed to an increase in note taking and study skills. It also shows absolutely no increase in student overall engagement.

Conclusion & Discussion:
1. The data show a substantial increase in the students' study and test taking skills. The use of Keynote presentations created by each student at the beginning of each unit and added onto at the end of each class and the use of these as a study guide has contributed to increased student academic achievement.
2. Reviewing the test before students start the test to make sure they understand what is expected of them in each section and question has alleviated, in my opinion, test anxiety and uncertainty as to requirements. Reviews of marked tests reinforced good test taking strategies.
3. There seems to have been little or no increase in student engagement. Teacher-generated data as well as student-generated data support this conclusion. The question must then be asked: what other factors were at play that caused these students' engagement levels to not increase? Therefore, any future work with this particular group should focus on the identification of factors that, for this group, hinders engagement and the implementation of strategies to address these factors.