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Fight the 'summer slide' with this e-book

Edtech company, Istation, a leader in literacy helps students year round

Miami Times staff report

With summer vacation here, many parents and teachers are concerned about "summer slide," the documented regression in reading skills that happens when students spend summer months away from school and regular reading practice.

In fact, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading reports that summer learning loss is one of the three major obstacles to reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

Research shows that summer slide hits children from low-income families hardest. By the time students reach high school, the summer slide gap accounts for two-thirds of the performance difference between children from low-income families and their peers.

Istation, a Dallas-based educational technology company, wants to prevent the summer slide in children's reading ability. The company provides school districts with electronic reading, math and Spanish-language programs.



Lockwood Lanterns Christiana (left) and Chrislove Dervil work in Istation math in teacher Jessica Lockwood's third-grade classroom at Poinciana Elementary School in Key West. Istation's products are aligned with Florida state educational standards.

Some school districts who use Istation are making the program available to students at home over the summer as part of its effort to help students stay ready for when school starts in the fall.

"We know a lot about summer slide," said Ossa Fisher, Istation's chief operating officer, who has written on the subject for Huffington Post.

"Over the years, it can lead to real regression in a child's

reading ability, as well as their ability to learn."

To help parents combat the summer slide, Istation has prepared a free e-book on the subject that is available in both English and Spanish at <http://info.istation.com/summerslide>.

"At Istation, we believe every kid has the ability in them to be a superhero," said Richard H. Collins, Istation chairman and CEO. "Our core value is to

help kids reach their potential, and a big enemy of potential is the summer slide. With our e-book, we want to help parents make sure their kids are ready for school in the fall.”

Fisher said that fighting the summer slide can be fun for both parents and children.

“Reading is not only a critical life skill, it is a great form of recreation,” she said. “Books can take readers any place their imaginations can cook up. We want parents to know they have immense power when it comes to making sure kids’ reading ability stays strong, even while the family is having fun this summer. In the end, we want families to have a great summer and students to be ready for an even better school year in the fall.”

A recent University of Central Florida study linked students’ Istation results to Florida Standards Assessments scores. The study, conducted by the Morgridge International Reading Center at the UCF said student results on Istation assessments can predict their performance on the FSA.

This gives teachers the opportunity to use Istation’s feedback to prepare their students for the statewide assessments. With Istation, teachers have the ability to monitor students’ learning achievements.

“I love that [Istation] tiers my students and provides individualized interventions



Monroe County student Adriana Reyes-Andino sports her new red cape from Istation. A student earning a red cape indicates they have achieved a goal set for them by their teacher. Istation uses the “Red Cape” iconography in its logo, showing that every student can be a super hero.

that I can use to help my struggling students,” said Jessica Lockwood, a third-grade teacher at Poinciana Elementary School in Key West.

Her class uses Istation Reading every week during reading rotations.

“Istation has been a very successful tool for our very youngest readers,” said Kelly Brower, literacy coach at Plantation Key School (pre-K through eighth grade) and Coral Shores High School in Tavernier, both in Monroe County. “Our kindergarten students are experiencing growth in every tier in both reading and math. In overall reading and ability in math, we have watched all of our Tier 3 students move into Tier 2. All of our Tier 2 students are now Tier 1 students in both reading and math.”

Even advanced students are benefitting, Brower noted, as the district’s Tier 1 students have continued to grow in both reading and math. Brower said Istation’s detailed data on individual student performance is a great tool for providing a multi-tiered system of supports.

The data allows teachers to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in both reading and math.

“Istation then has teacher-directed lessons that allow the teacher to pull a small group of students and teach a targeted lesson that addresses the students’ areas of opportunity,” she said. “Istation allows for a teacher to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all the students in the classroom.”