



THE COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION  
Educational Training, Evaluation, Assessment, and  
Measurement Department (E-TEAM)

# Great Expectations Evaluation 2003-2004

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## Executive Summary

Great Expectations (GE) is a teacher/administrator professional development program that provides teachers and administrators with the skills and knowledge needed to improve academic achievement, school climate, attendance, and parent involvement. GE is founded on the fundamental belief that education is the key to solving the problems of our society, that educators want to become more skilled in their quest to educate students, and that students want to learn. The founders of GE believe that, while there is discussion of educational reform, too little is being done to positively affect student achievement.

The main objective of GE is to increase students' intellectual knowledge, self-esteem, and social competencies. To accomplish this, GE focuses on the transformation of educators (through professional development) and the transformation of schools (through organizational change). GE strives to help educators re-examine their teaching methods and interactions with students as well as assist them in redefining their values and beliefs about learning processes. The GE Board of Directors meets regularly to review program activities, monitor financial status, assess program strengths and weaknesses, and make decisions about future endeavors.

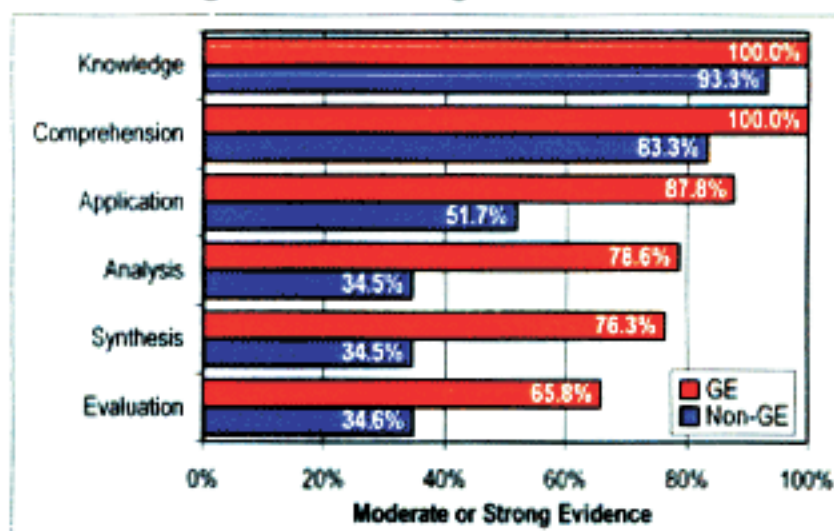
**GE professional development activities are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher' performance in the classroom and are not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences.**

- Great Expectations training consists of 28 hours of actual class time. Follow-up opportunities include the following:
- One regional training day in the fall consisting of five hours
- Two Saturday sessions in the fall consisting of three hours each
- One regional training day in the spring consisting of five hours
- One Saturday session in the spring consisting of three hours
- Mentor services available upon request
- Ongoing opportunities available through the use of the website-blogs, forums, electronic newsletter, etc.
- Distance learning sessions.

Practice 3 in GE classrooms, compared to non-GE classrooms. Observers reported moderate to strong evidence of overall Practice 3 implementation by 100% of GE teachers, compared to 77.4% of non-GE teachers.

- 1.2 times more likely than were non-GE classrooms to exhibit evidence that the teacher teaches on his/her feet, engages students personally, holds high expectations of students, and does not limit them to grade level or perceived ability (Practice 15). Observers reported moderate to strong evidence of overall Practice 15 implementation in 95.2% of GE classrooms, compared to 80.6% of non-GE classrooms.

### Percentage of Classrooms Rated as Moderate or Strong Evidence of Students Demonstrating Critical Thinking Skills in GE and non-GE Classrooms



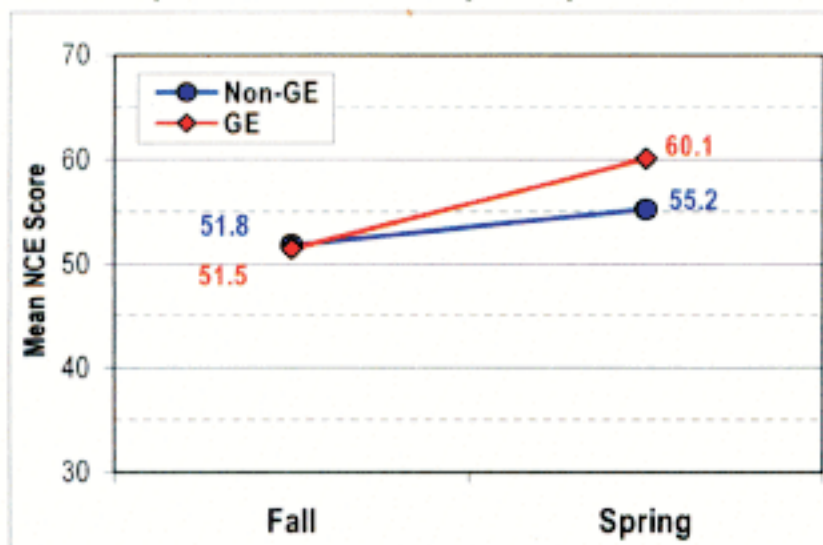
Students in GE classrooms were rated significantly higher on demonstrating critical thinking skills including knowledge, comprehension, application, synthesis, and evaluation. The differences were more pronounced for the higher-level skills of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Observers

were 1.2 times more likely to indicate they saw either moderate or strong evidence of students demonstrating comprehension in GE classrooms, 1.7 times more likely to indicate they saw either moderate or strong evidence of students demonstrating application, 2.3 times more likely to indicate they saw either moderate or strong evidence of students analysis, 2.2 times more likely to indicate they saw either moderate or strong evidence of students demonstrating synthesis, and 1.9 times more likely to indicate they saw either moderate or strong evidence of students demonstrating evaluation in GE classrooms.

Overall, the classroom observation data confirms that both teachers and students in GE classrooms are implementing the majority of GE Practices, and that GE classrooms are more likely to be implementing GE Practices than are non-GE classrooms. With the exception of Practice 8 (enriched vocabulary drawn directly from challenging writings and/or wisdom literature), smaller differences between GE and non-GE classrooms in Practice implementation were due to a higher proportion of non-GE teachers implementing the Practice.

## Gains in Student Achievement

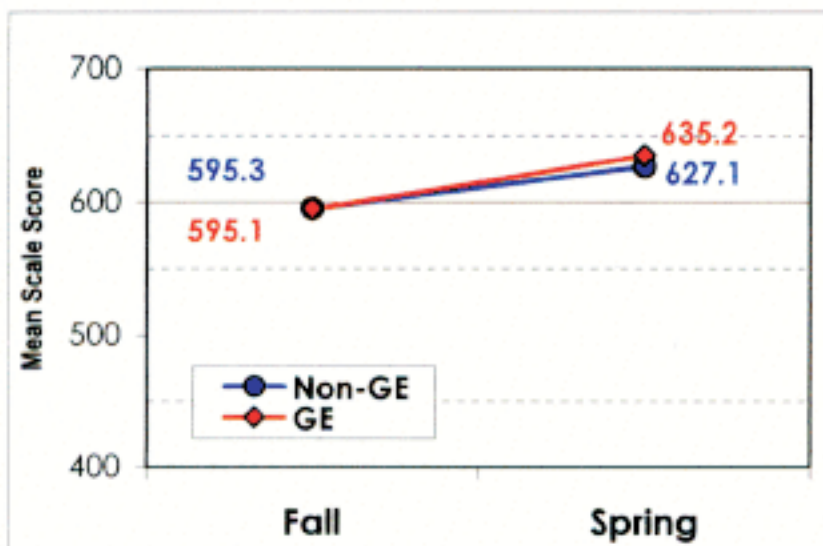
### Total Composite NCE Scores, by Group—First, Third and Fifth Grades.



GE students showed significantly more gain in the TerraNova Total NCE score than did non-GE students. Both GE and non-GE students started the school year scoring slightly higher than the average student in the national norm group (51.5 vs. 51.8); however, by spring testing, the GE students scored higher

than 60.1% of the national norm group whereas the non-GE students scored higher than 55.2% of the national norm group. GE students gained an average of 8.6 NCE points during the school year compared to the non-GE group who gained on average 3.4 NCE points during the school year. The average GE student's gain in TerraNova Total Score exceeded the scores of 65% of the non-GE group (Effect size= 0.38).

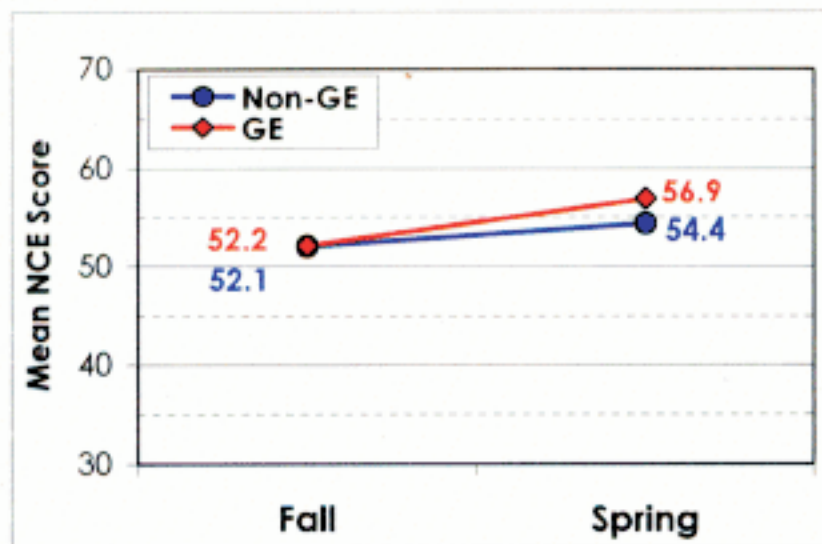
### Reading Composite Scale Scores, by Group—First, Third and Fifth Grades.



Across first through fifth grades, the GE students showed significantly more gain in Reading Composite scale scores than did the non-GE group. GE students gained an average of 40.1 Reading Composite scale score points during the school year, and the non-GE group gained an average of 31.7 scale score points.

The average GE student's gain in Reading Composite exceeded the gain scores of 59% of the non-GE group (Effect size = 0.22).

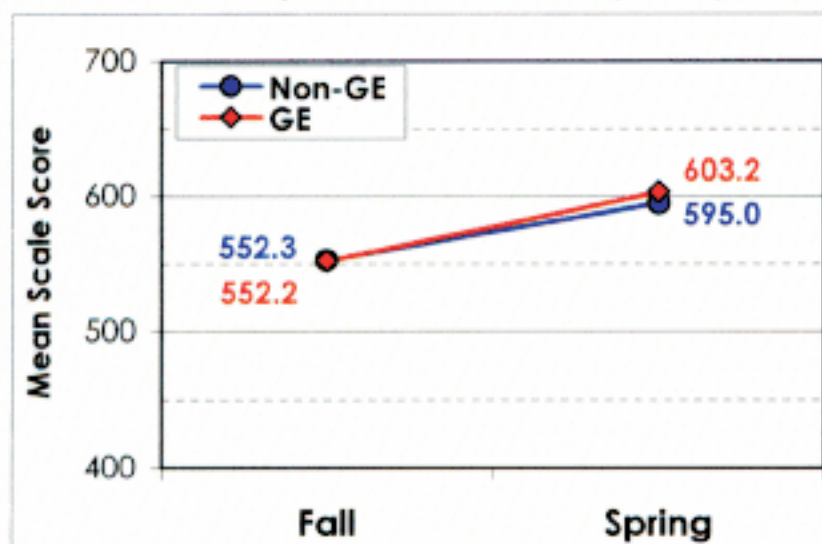
### Language Composite NCE Scores, by Group—Third and Fifth Grades.



The gain in TerraNova Language Composite test NCE scores for GE first grade students approached statistical significance. GE students gained an average of 4.7 NCE points in Language Composite during the school year, and the non-GE group gained an average of 2.3 NCE points. The average GE student's gain in

Language Composite NCE scores exceeded the gain scores of 57% of the non-GE group (Effect size = 0.18).

### Mathematics Composite Scale Scores, by Group—First through Fifth Grades



Across first through fifth grades, the GE students showed significantly more gain in the Mathematics Composite test scale scores than did the non-GE group. GE students gained an average of 51.0 scale score points in Mathematics Composite during the school year, and the

non-GE group gained an average of 42.7 scale score points. The average GE student's gain in Mathematics Composite scale scores exceeded the gain scores of 60% of the non-GE group (Effect size = 0.25).

These findings indicate that students in classrooms implementing Great Expectations methodology showed greater gains in student academic achievement during the school year compared to demographically similar students not exposed to GE.

Findings from principal, teacher, parent, and student surveys, the classroom observations, and student achievement all differed in ways that would be expected based on GE implementation. The fact that parents noticed differences in their children's behavior indicates that the skills students learn in GE classrooms are also being used outside the classroom. Across all three grades, GE parents were significantly more likely to report that their children show interest, excitement, and involvement in learning and enjoying learning activities. This is consistent with teacher and principal self-reports as well as observer ratings of classroom behavior. It is clear from this study that GE not only increases student achievement, but it also creates positive attitudinal and behavioral changes for principals, teachers and students at schools, in classrooms as well as in other domains.