

Juvenile Offenders Get Second Chance with the Help of ABBYY FineReader®

Client: Metsker Heights High School program for juvenile offenders

Location: Willamette Education District, Oregon

Size: Ten to twelve at-risk students in temporary foster homes participating in alternative education program

Head Teacher: Duane Bean

Product: ABBYY FineReader Professional

“This is a HUGE time saver.”

- Duane Bean
Head Teacher, Metsker Heights High School

“In the past, I manually transcribed thousands of lines of text from primary sources. FineReader has freed me from that monumentally time consuming task..”

Metsker Heights High School program for juvenile offenders

The Metsker Heights program in the Willamette Educational District in Oregon is a short-term behavioral and academic day school for high school-aged students who have been identified with emotional/behavioral disorders and are experiencing significant behavioral, social, and academic difficulties. At any one time the program hosts 10-12 students, all of whom live in temporary foster homes as part of the Oregon Treatment Foster Care Program, which is a six to nine month program that provides an alternative to incarceration or group-home care for youths who are referred by the juvenile justice system.

At Metsker Heights, a strong emphasis is placed on effective problem-solving through communication, anger and conflict management, responsible decision-making and reinforcing newly learned skills. The program strives to teach students that they must change the way they think in order to change the way they act.

Interventions at Metsker are highly individualized and all academic studies take place in the classroom setting. Each student works at his or her own schedule in small groups and learning is enhanced by the use of hands-on experiential and technological based activities.

Reluctant Learners Excel with ABBYY FineReader

According to head teacher Duane Bean, the students are generally highly reluctant learners with short attention spans, high impulsivity, low tolerance for delayed gratification and long histories of academic failure and disciplinary problems. Moreover, the majority of these youths are not auditory learners and thus experience great difficulty processing verbal instruction, he said.

These factors can form an almost insurmountable barrier when students are faced with a typical language arts assignment such as the “double entry journal”, a task which requires learners to select and write interesting, provocative, and sometimes disturbing passages from literary works and then respond to them. Mr. Bean’s students have little patience for the time-intensive task of copying long-hand the notes and passages even if they are only three to five sentences in length. With ABBYY FineReader, however, Mr. Bean can scan the literary text and convert it into a searchable Microsoft Word document. Having highlighted selected passages in their books, students can easily and almost effortlessly search the Word document for the desired text and perform a copy/paste to place that text into their double entry journal. This is especially important for slow

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typists who quickly succumb to the frustration created by having to type both the literary passages and their responses.

“Huge” Difference Between OCR Brands

Mr. Bean previously used a competitive Optical Character Recognition (OCR) product for a year, but when he discovered and began using the trial version of FineReader, he noticed a big difference.

“For my purposes, FineReader is superior to other products in three respects: First, the user interface is far more intuitive resulting in a low learning curve. Second, the OCR is more accurate. Finally, since I don’t have a document feeder built into my flatbed scanner, I absolutely love the feature where I can set a 10 second scan interval when I’m scanning a multiple-page document and the program automatically triggers the scanner to shoot an image. This is a HUGE time saver compared to having to navigate menus every time a new page is loaded. “In my opinion, FineReader is a far superior product,” said Mr. Bean.

Drudge Work Removed to Facilitate Learning

“FineReader is also a godsend for teachers like myself who are fond of using out-of-print texts. I can scan just the portions I want from the original and provide searchable and editable texts for my students to use,” said Mr. Bean. He further extends the integration of the ABBYY OCR technology into his classroom by having students highlight vocabulary words in the original text and, using an online dictionary, copy and paste the definition right next to the word in question, vastly increasing the efficiency of student vocabulary acquisition. “The key to working with any technology,” says Mr. Bean, “is to remove the drudge work so students can spend their precious classroom time on the real business of learning. In the past, I manually transcribed thousands of lines of text from primary sources. FineReader has freed me from that monumentally time consuming task so I can now spend more of my limited time creating exciting lessons.”

See How Others Are Succeeding with FineReader!

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