Impact Study

Third Edition

Solutions

What skills and strategies do students need to achieve exam success?
Background

*Solutions* is Oxford’s best-selling secondary English Language Teaching course, and has supported millions of students to succeed in English exams worldwide. An impact study was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of how teachers feel that *Solutions* contributes to exam success.

Research Objective

To find out if teachers believe that using *Solutions* helps students to improve the skills and strategies they need to achieve exam success.

Methodology

Oxford Impact is Oxford University Press’s approach to evaluating the impact that our educational products and services have on teaching and learning. An impact study investigates a particular change or outcome that a product or service has on the group of people it is intended to help or benefit.

We received 196 responses from teachers in 14 different countries who have all used a course from the *Solutions* series for more than one year.

Key Findings

- **98%** of teachers agree that using *Solutions* has helped their students improve the skills and strategies they need to achieve exam success.
- **97.5%** believe that the *Solutions* grammar and vocabulary syllabus helps develop strong foundations on which effective exam skills can be built.
- **96.5%** agree that using *Solutions* has helped their students improve the core skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) they need to achieve exam success.
- **96.5%** agree that the *Solutions* series provides plenty of opportunities for their students to practise and improve their exam strategies and skills.
How does Solutions help students improve exam skills and strategies?

98% of teachers who participated in this impact study agree that using Solutions helps students to improve exams skills and strategies. Teachers were asked to explain the reason for their answer. Their responses highlighted several key themes:

1. Solutions includes the types of activities and tasks that students are likely to find in their exams.

   “Exam-like tasks help them to get practice and develop task-awareness.”
   “The course book provides clear exam strategies and sample tasks.”
   “The structure of the lessons in the book is clear and the exercises are very suitable for students to get used to the format of the real test.”

2. The series covers all the core skills required for exams.

   “With the help of Solutions, my students can build ample vocabulary and improve all the necessary skills - reading, writing, listening and speaking - for their exams.”
   “I can find everything I need to prepare my students for school leaving exams - grammar, reading, speaking, listening, writing, tests...”

3. Students have the opportunity to practise.

   “The series practises all skills required for the exam.”
   “The book is very well organised and this design helps the teacher to practise the different skills in each unit.”

4. It helps students to pass their exams.

   “Many of my students have successfully passed the national exam A2.”
   “Solutions series help to develop all skills needed to pass State Exam in English”.
   “The teachers have adopted this series for 3 years and had seen improvement in student admission score into bachelor degree.”
Which features in Solutions are perceived to develop exam skills most effectively?

We asked teachers to tell us how effective different features in Solutions are at helping students develop and improve exam strategies and skills. Each feature was rated as ‘effective’ or ‘very effective’ by more than 90% of teachers, with activities and strategies in the main units believed to be the most effective features overall.

What types of exam skill and strategies do teachers believe Solutions helps to develop?

Teachers provided some specific examples of the exam skills and strategies they believe that Solutions has helped their students develop and improve:

**Reading**
- “Reading for gist and detail or specific information.”
- “Reading comprehension and approaching texts with different strategies.”
- “Scanning and skimming.”
- “Reading strategies - the book gives example of all sorts of reading tasks one might expect in an exam - multiple choice, gap-fill, T/F…”

**Writing**
- “Mainly writing strategies. The writing section helps students develop their ideas step by step and according to the genre.”
- “How to write letters, essays, book/film reviews [and] how to describe pictures.”

**Speaking**
- “Speaking skills [such] as a photo description, comparisons, usage of correct phrases and words when building dialogues and playing roles.”
- “My students find the tips for speaking skills are quite useful. The speaking activities are well scaffolded.”

**Additional skills highlighted by teachers**
- “Identifying the things that are being asked, knowing the tester’s intention.”
- “Creating certain patterns in solving language problems.”
- “Those where students need to fill the gaps, multiple choice, and completing the statements.”

Conclusions

98% of teachers who participated in this impact study agree that using Solutions helps students to improve the skills and strategies needed to achieve exam success, and 83% of respondents intend to continue using Solutions in the future.
Find out how Solutions will spark your students’ interest and drive them to succeed. Visit www.oup.com/elt and search ‘Solutions’.

- **Motivate** every student with diverse topics and support to help them reach their goals.
- **Activate** language and develop confident communicators with a NEW comprehensive listening syllabus and NEW Word Skills lessons.
- **Achieve** success in class, in exams and beyond with thorough exam practice and projects for developing real world skills.

The Oxford Impact Framework is a systematic approach to evaluating the impact of Oxford University Press products and services. It was developed through a unique collaboration with the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and is supported by the Oxford University Department of Education.