



AIM Institute for Learning & Research

The Impact of Pathways to Proficient Reading on Teacher Knowledge Maria Toglia, Ed.D.

The Problem

Despite a well established research base indicating that most students require systematic, code based reading instruction, many teachers lack the knowledge about the English language necessary to implement these structured literacy methods in the classroom.

Implications of Below Grade Level Reading

Children who do not read on grade level by the 4th grade are at increased risk of:

- School drop-out
- Involvement in the criminal justice system
- Chronic under or unemployment
- Reduced educational attainment- associated with poor health outcomes

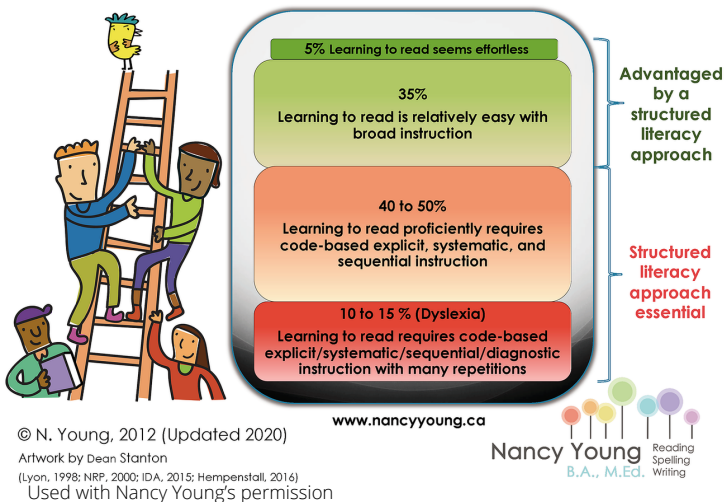
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to examine the impact of the Pathways to Proficient Reading professional development (PD) program on teacher knowledge of English language structures. Knowledge of English language structures is necessary for accurate modeling and error correction during explicit reading instruction, and for effectively applying student assessment data to instruction that meets individual needs.



Data from the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress indicates that only one-third of fourth and eighth grade students are able to read proficiently on grade level.

The Ladder of Reading ©



Teachers Need Expert Knowledge to Teach Reading

Teachers need specialized knowledge about reading development and English language structures, classroom implementation strategies and assessment methods in order to meet the needs of developing readers using structured literacy practices (IDA, 2018; Moats, 2014, 2017). Given the inherent complexities of the English language, however, teachers cannot rely on their own reading skills to know how to teach students to read (Washburn, Joshi & Binks-Cantrell, 2011). Teachers need direct instruction themselves to acquire this specialized knowledge (Moats, 2014).

Pathways to Proficient Reading

- Aligned with IDA's KPSTR- is content driven
- Delivered in an online virtual learning platform accessible 24/7 from any device
- Can be completed at a self-directed pace
- Includes 17 learn, practice and apply learning modules
- Actively engages teachers in a variety of formats, including opportunities to apply new knowledge to real student scenarios
- End of module quizzes provide corrective feedback and opportunities for review



The Impact of Pathways to Proficient Reading on Teacher Knowledge

- Includes Virtual Communities of Practice coaching sessions to provide expert mentoring and facilitate peer collaboration to support classroom implementation.

Method and Findings

Pre-test and post-test scores from the Reading Assessment Survey (RAS) were analyzed for 61 teachers who completed the Pathways to Proficient Reading PD program. The RAS measures teacher knowledge of phonology, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and literacy assessment, concepts that have been previously identified as essential components of effective reading instruction (IDA, 2018).

- There was a significant increase in composite knowledge scores (from 64% to 81%) following participation in the Pathways to Proficient Reading Program.
- There was not a significant difference in knowledge gains depending on rate of program completion.
- Having the flexibility to self direct pace of program completion did not compromise the efficacy of the program. While there was not a linear relationship between VCP participation and knowledge gains, a high rate of participation among participants, regardless of knowledge level, provided the opportunity for expert support and cooperative learning.
- There was not a significant relationship between composite knowledge gain scores and frequency of participation in the virtual community of practice.

Implications

The efficacy of the Pathways to Proficient Reading PD program indicates that providing teachers with training that is aligned with the KPSTR can effectively increase teacher knowledge of structured literacy constructs, and should be considered in lieu of traditional, short-term stand and deliver PD.

The gains made in teacher knowledge were likely related to the active, content focused and collaborative nature of the learning activities. The program was highly relevant to teachers' classroom practices and of sufficient duration to allow for practice, reflection and feedback.

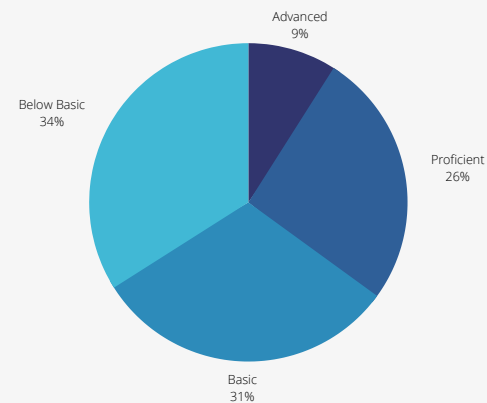
The online format has the potential to expand access to high quality PD for teachers of reading, including to areas that lack access to in person training opportunities

The significant increase in teacher knowledge of English language structures represents an important step in changing classroom teaching strategies that have the potential to increase reading proficiency.

Future research should focus on how school systems can support teachers' ability to apply their knowledge of English language structures to effective structured literacy practices that significantly improve student reading outcomes.

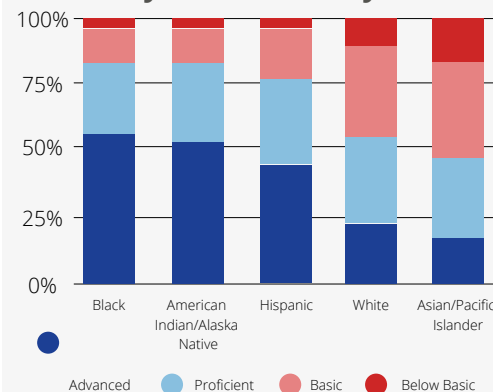
Significance of The Problem

2019 NAEP 4th Grade Reading Scores



Data from the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress indicate that the majority of 4th grade students fall in the Below Basic range in reading.

U.S. 4th Graders' Reading Levels by Race/Ethnicity



SOURCE: The National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2019

Contact AIM Institute

Email: institute@aimpa.org
(215) 483-2461

1200 River Road
Conshohocken, PA 19428



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