McGraw Hill Education

Literacy Curriculum Programs Evidence Guide

Literacy *is for* Life

PreK-12 Literacy Solutions

Creating an Environment Where Literacy Thrives

For literacy action plans and improvement initiatives to be effective, schools must adopt English Language Arts (ELA) programs that are research-based, aligned with standards, and designed to meet the needs of diverse PreK–12 learners. This guide is intended to help inform your curriculum program review process.

Use this guide to:

- Read high-level summaries of our range of literacy programs.
- Learn how these programs are informed by research.
- See research-validated results from real-world program implementations.

A mandate for programs supported by evidence

The guidelines of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) call for programs and interventions to be "evidence-based." That means their activities, strategies, and interventions should show a statistically significant positive effect on student outcomes or other relevant outcomes (Sparks, 2015).

The literacy programs in this guide have proven their effectiveness through one or more of the levels of evidence specified by ESSA:

- **Strong evidence**, which is drawn from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (i.e., a randomized, controlled trial)
- **Moderate evidence**, which comes from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study
- **Promising evidence**, which is drawn from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias
- **Research findings or evaluations** that point to the high quality of a curriculum program and its ability to improve student performance outcomes

Our commitment to evidence-based literacy instruction

Learning Science is McGraw-Hill Education's approach to improving educational outcomes. Grounded in deep insights into how learning happens, it guides us to deliver tools, platforms, and services proven to power performance and achievement. We harness technology and data insights both inside and outside the classroom to ignite the spark between teaching and learning.

We offer educators:

- An open ecosystem that fosters a seamless learning experience.
- Robust and proven content that supports individual students' goals.
- Adaptive technology that creates personalized learning.
- Data that powers informed decisions.

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Core Comprehensive Literacy

Wonders (K-6)

Wonders is a comprehensive K–6 literacy solution built to meet the rigorous new standards. Through intentional instruction, inspiring content, and purposeful technology, it prepares all students for college and the demands of 21st-century careers.

Wonders provides support for:

- Building strong early reading skills.
- Accessing complex text.
- Finding and using text evidence.
- Engaging in collaborative conversations.
- Writing to sources.
- Conducting research and inquiry.

The role of research

Evidence-based practices and content from the most academically rigorous models help *Wonders* students build the literacy skills for success in the classroom and beyond. From the start, this program has incorporated seminal research in effective reading instruction. It continues to reflect the most recent research as well as the new initiatives from state standards for English language arts developed with the help of:

- Teachers.
- School administrators.
- Researchers.
- Leaders from state education departments.

Key efficacy evidence

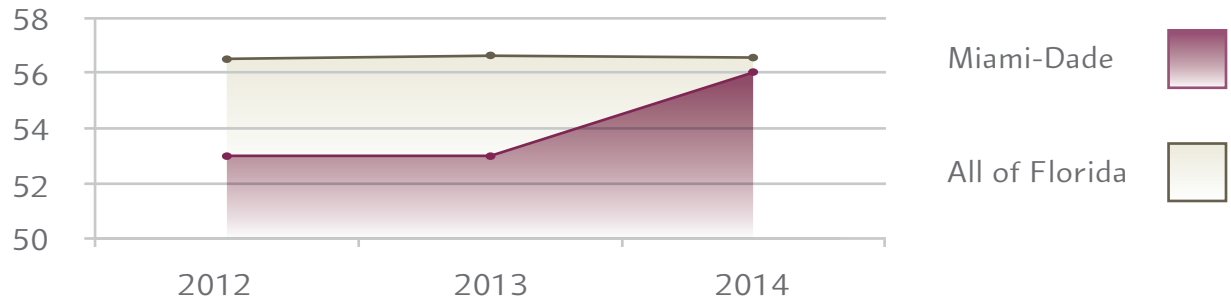**Highlights from the body of research supporting this program**

Case study: Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Wonders helped Miami-Dade, the nation's fourth-largest school district, raise its students' reading scores in less than one school year. *Wonders* also provided the tools to support ongoing proficiency in reading, writing, and critical thinking.
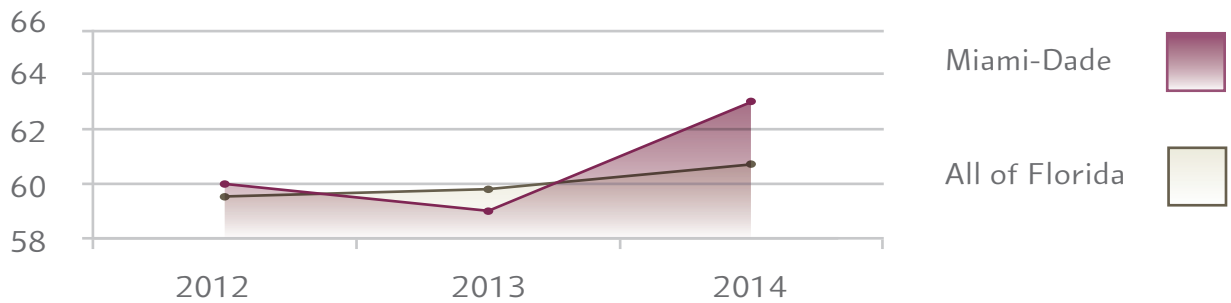
Every April, third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students in Florida take a state-administered assessment. In 2013, when Miami-Dade students took the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT 2.0), the percentage scoring "Proficient" in reading was well below the state average. That year, Miami-Dade chose *Wonders* as its new literacy program. After just eight months of *Wonders* instruction, Miami-Dade students took the FCAT 2.0 again. Not only did Miami-Dade close its achievement gap, its students' reading proficiency levels exceeded the state average.

The district's gains in student performance continued even as Florida transitioned from the FCAT 2.0 to the new Florida Standards Assessments (FSA). Based on these assessments, every school in Florida was given a grade between A and F. Between 2015 and 2016, the number of elementary schools receiving a failing grade in Miami-Dade was reduced by more than 50 percent—from 14 schools to just five (McGraw-Hill Education, 2016).
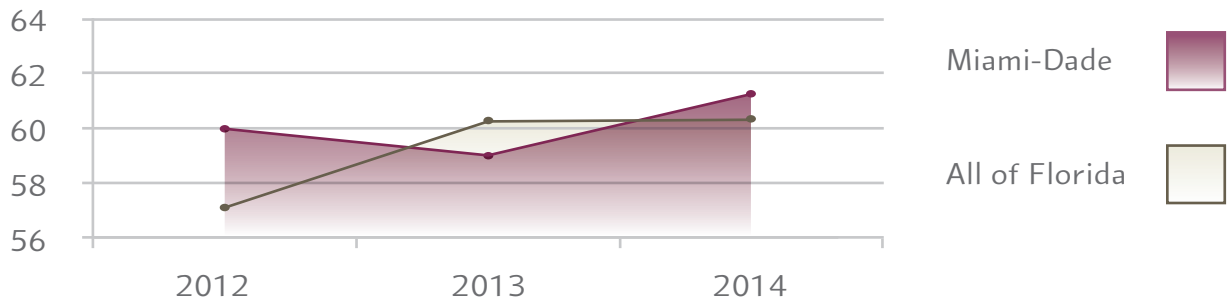
3rd Grade

	Miami-Dade
	All of Florida

4th Grade

	Miami-Dade
	All of Florida

5th Grade

	Miami-Dade
	All of Florida

Third-party evaluations: Johns Hopkins University

In 2014, McGraw-Hill Education partnered with the Johns Hopkins University School of Education to conduct a series of third-party evaluations of Wonders (which at that time was called Reading Wonders) to gain a greater understanding of the program's efficacy. The study involved fourth-grade students in 17 elementary schools in California, Kansas, and Illinois (13 treatment schools and four comparison schools). All schools began using the program in fall 2014.

In the Teacher Reaction Survey:

- All participants reported that *Wonders* (RW) was aligned with standards in the areas of reading fluency and understanding key ideas and details of texts.

- More than 94 percent of participants reported that their students used thinking/reasoning skills and strategies with the program.

- More than 85 percent would choose to implement the program again (Ross et al, 2016).

Core Comprehensive Literacy

SRA Open Court Reading (K–3)

SRA Open Court Reading is a comprehensive reading and language arts program that reinforces learning using:

- Systematic, explicit instruction that helps build students' abilities through a logical progression of skills.
- A spiral curriculum that helps teachers introduce new skills while reinforcing previously taught skills.
- Core concepts and skills that are reinforced at every level to provide scaffolding for students in all areas.

The role of research

The *Open Court Reading* curriculum is built upon more than 50 years of research, field testing, and time-tested instructional models balanced with teacher input. The program's authors, who are educators and researchers, have incorporated the latest findings about effective ways of teaching reading and writing. Within the program, key instructional areas build across grade levels to help ensure that students become confident and effective readers by the end of grade 3.

Strong evidence suggests that *Open Court Reading* successfully addresses phonemic awareness, word recognition and phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Moderate evidence suggests that it successfully addresses vocabulary – meeting individual needs – and professional development. It has been proven with diverse student populations in classrooms across the country and validated by the results of standardized tests.

Open Court Reading gives educators:

A blueprint for success
Decades of research enhances robust professional development and ongoing partnerships with districts and educators.

Systematic teaching, systematic learning
A carefully crafted instructional plan helps ensure confidence and growth for students and teachers.

Resources for reaching every learner
A range of differentiation options extend literacy to all students, including at-risk students and English Learners (ELs).

Key efficacy evidence

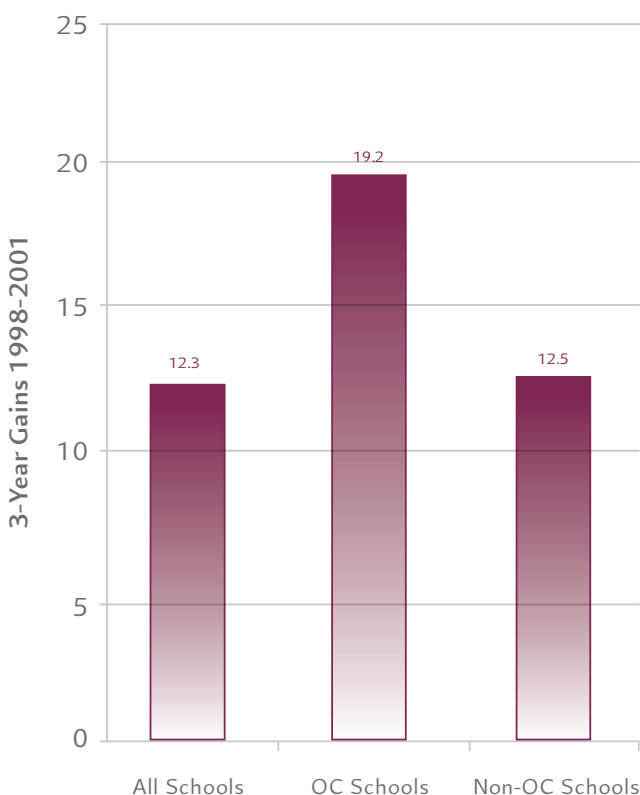## Highlights from the body of research supporting this program

Research study: The McRae Report

The McRae Report is a three-year study involving over 375,000 students in more than 700 schools. In this study, *Open Court Reading* schools achieved 50 to 75 percent higher reading gains than non-*Open Court Reading* schools (19 points vs. 12 points for grade 2, 13 points vs. seven points for grade 3 based on three-year gain scores involving about 300 schools). The program made the biggest difference in schools with concentrations of Low Socioeconomic Status (low-SES) students. Gains were measured by the STAR, Stanford 9, and California Standards Tests.
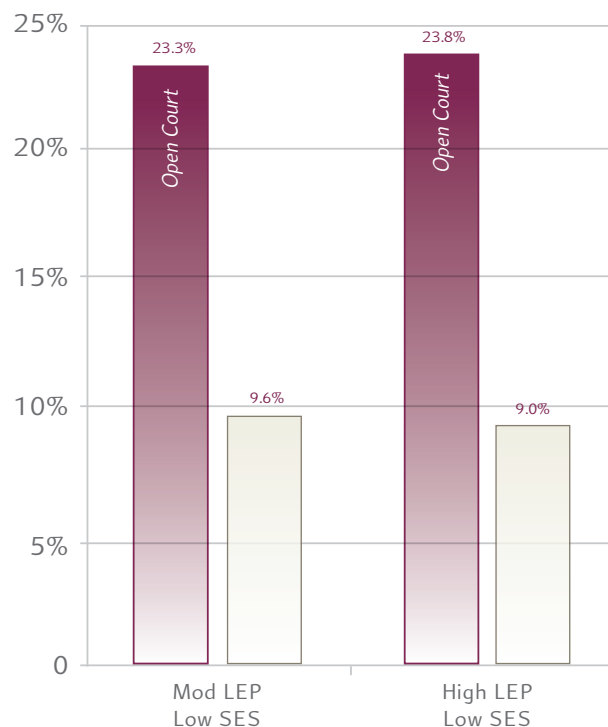
Based on one-year gains for more than 700 schools, *Open Court* schools outgained non-*Open Court* comparison schools by a factor of four (5.2 points vs. 1.2 points for grade 2). The results of the study provide clear and convincing evidence that students attending schools that used *Open Court Reading* materials acquired basic reading skills faster than students attending demographically similar schools that did not use *Open Court Reading* materials (McGraw-Hill Education, 2002).

Open Court *provided the largest score gains for schools with high concentrations of both LEP (Limited English Proficient) and Low-SES (Socio-Economic Status) students.*

Grade 2

Grade 2

Core Comprehensive Literacy

StudySync *(6-12)*

StudySync is a comprehensive blended ELA/EL literacy program that combines powerful digital instruction with engaging optional print resources. Its core curriculum links literacy and learning with the way today's students experience the world. Teachers benefit from the program's easy-to-use, flexible platform, which includes strong classroom management tools and online standards-based assessment.

StudySync offers:

- Four core units of study at each grade level.
- An expansive digital library of high-quality texts representing all genres, including literary and informational.
- Short- and long-form writing assignments with built-in tools for teacher and peer review.

- Scaffolded instruction for beginning, intermediate, and proficient English learners and approaching grade-level learners.
- Assessment opportunities embedded throughout the program.

The role of research

Substantial research informs the *StudySync* user experience. Leading academics designed it to make literacy instruction more engaging for students. Engagement, which may take multiple forms, can help bring new excitement, confidence, and competence to learning. Strategies for improving student engagement include finding innovative ways to link learning to personal experiences or interests, collaborating in the classroom and within the community, providing supportive teachers and a caring educational environment, and using technology in ways that give students rich, relevant, and easy-to-access resources.

Key efficacy evidence

Highlights from the body of research supporting this program

Case study: Highland West Junior High School

Highland West Junior High School, in Moore, Oklahoma, identified 271 on-level and advanced seventh-grade students to participate in a study for one semester. One-half of the students were enrolled in classes that used *StudySync*, and the other half—the comparison group—continued with their regular curriculum.
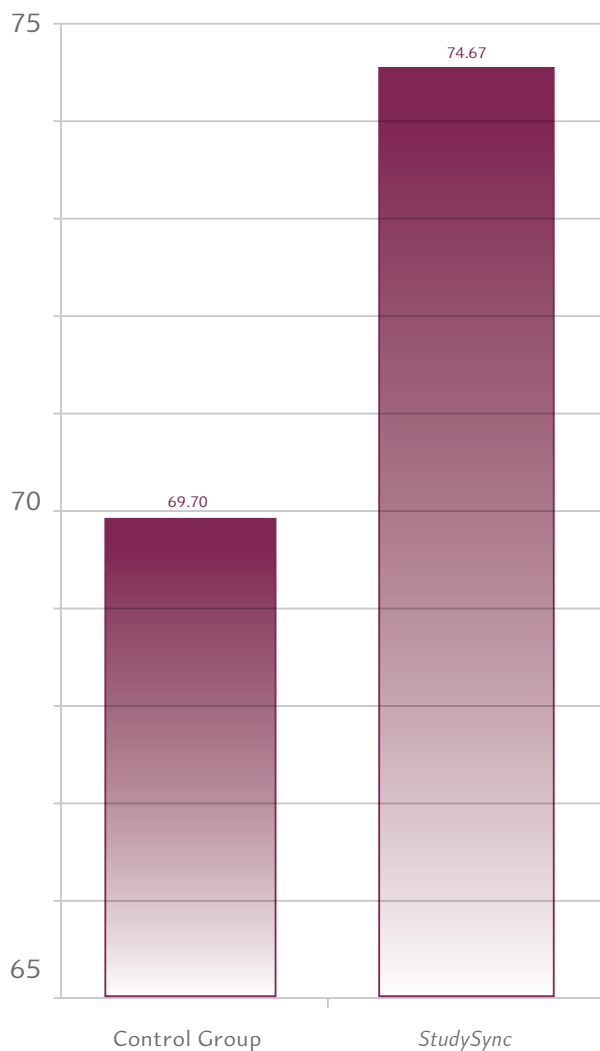
To properly measure and track student progress over the course of the semester, students received a district-administered pretest and a posttest.

Students in both groups were first tested early in the school year, prior to the implementation of the literacy programs, to establish a baseline. Near the end of the school year, after using either *StudySync* or the alternate curriculum, they were tested again to measure their progress.

The *StudySync* students received an average posttest score of 74.67, while the comparison group averaged 69.70 points. *StudySync* students outperformed their peers by more than 7 percent.

In conclusion, the program's positive impact on test scores did not vary by ethnicity, gender, free/reduced lunch status, primary home language, special education status, or even the teacher in the classroom.

Mean Adjusted Posttest Scores

Mean posttest scores, adjusted for pretest scores

Core Comprehensive Literacy

Thrive™ powered by *Time to Know* (3-8)

Thrive powered by *Time To Know* is a digital teaching environment that contains core content in a range of subject areas, including English Language Arts. Its holistic approach to learning combines a standards-based curriculum with the tools teachers need to manage a dynamic, digital, 1:1 classroom efficiently and effectively. The program helps inform and evolve instruction through:

- Real-time progress monitoring.
- Collaboration tools.
- Automated differentiation.
- Tech-enhanced assessments.

The role of research

Thrive is based on research and founded on the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which brings content, pedagogy, and technology together. Multiple case studies document the ways in which *Thrive* has facilitated positive student growth. This growth is closely correlated with improvement in student test scores in statewide administered tests.

Key efficacy evidence

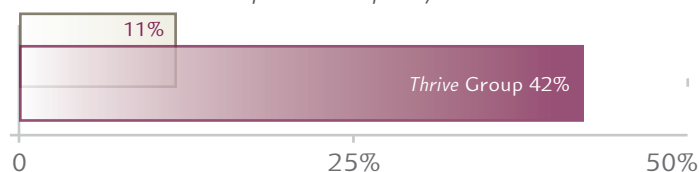### Highlights from the body of research supporting this program

Case study: New York City Schools

During the 2011–2012 school year, three New York City schools, located in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, used *Thrive* for English Language Arts instruction. To measure the program's impact, data was collected from student and teacher focus groups, school principal interviews, and New York state test scores.

Results showed that 42 percent of the grade 4 students who had used the *Thrive* ELA program reached the third and fourth levels on the New York state tests, compared to only 11 percent reaching the same levels the prior year without using the *Thrive* ELA program (McGraw-Hill Education, 2011–2012).
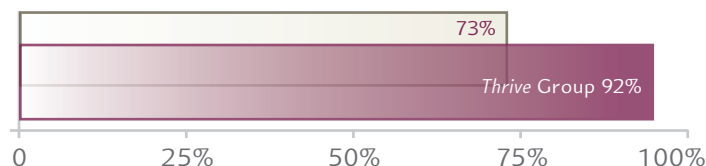
Percent of grade 4 students reaching the third and fourth levels as compared to the prior year.

11%

Thrive Group 42%

0   25%   50%

Case study: Glen Rose Independent School District

At Glen Rose Intermediate School, located in Glen Rose, Texas, 29 percent of students are Hispanic and 47.3 percent are eligible for reduced lunch. Both of these groups have benefited from *Thrive*. In 2014, Hispanic students who had been using *Thrive* increased their State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) passing rates in ELA from 76 percent to 98 percent. For economically disadvantaged students, passing rates in reading increased from 73 percent to an astounding 92 percent (McGraw-Hill Education, 2014).

STAAR pass rates for economically disadvantaged compared to the prior year.

73%

Thrive Group 92%

0   25%   50%   75%   100%

Supplemental Literacy

SRA Reading Laboratory™ 2.0 (K-12)

SRA Reading Laboratory 2.0 is an interactive, personalized reading practice program based on the classic print *SRA Reading Laboratory*. It makes proven leveled reading instruction available on any device, anytime, anywhere. This gives students more opportunities for practice and enhances ease of use for teachers.

Designed to complement any core reading and language arts program, *SRA Reading Laboratory 2.0:*

- Provides 23 Lexile ranges with passages from 200 Lexile through level 1250.
- Contains more than 560 passages focused on the 500 to 900 Lexile range, comprised largely of nonfiction, and spread across all genres as required by state standards.
- Enables students to learn at their own level and manage their own learning experience.
- Fosters critical thinking with engaging 21st-century community and writing features.
- Enhances comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, word analysis, and study skills.

The role of research

Lessons in *SRA Reading Laboratory 2.0* include phonics, decodable text, timed reading and fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, test preparation, and literature. The program's fundamental concepts and instructional design are supported by research from the National Reading Panel.

Key efficacy evidence

Highlights from the body of research supporting this program

Research report: The National Reading Panel

A report from the National Reading Panel includes research documentation that supports this program's:

- Comprehension skills instruction, practice, and strategies.
- Phonics skills and strategies.
- Vocabulary skills and instructional practices.
- Fluency instruction and practices (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH, DHIS, 2000).

Supplemental Literacy

SRA FLEX Literacy (3–12)

SRA FLEX Literacy fosters reading achievement for all learners using powerful technology that individualizes instruction, motivates students, and accelerates learning.

By creating a student-specific learning path, the research-based instructional model in *FLEX Literacy* supports students every step of the way. Through ongoing progress monitoring, teachers stay informed to make data-driven decisions that maximize time and learning outcomes.

FLEX Literacy uses embedded, scaffolded instruction, practice, assessment, acceleration, remediation, and review opportunities to provide comprehensive reading and language arts instruction that is engaging, effective, and easy-to-use. It is designed to reach students of all levels from Beginning Reader to 1300L. Students are engaged by high-interest interactive lessons and rich text selections. Teachers are empowered to tailor instruction through ongoing assessment that informs effective differentiation. Administrators are equipped with the tools and information necessary for decision-making.

SRA FLEX Literacy:

- Delivers powerful technology-based instruction to accelerate learning outcomes for students of all ability levels.

- Fits the needs of all districts through flexible implementations that work regardless of class size or schedule.

- Provides dynamic, individualized learning through data-driven differentiation and continuous progress monitoring.

The role of research

FLEX Literacy utilizes the Gradual Release model of instruction, which gives students explicit modeling ("I do"), guided practice ("we do"), independent practice ("you do"), assessment, and maintenance opportunities to help them learn critical reading skills and complex strategies. Each student moves along a learning path tailored to his or her reading level - an approach proven effective by research. Ongoing assessment and progress monitoring allows teachers to make data-driven decisions that maximize time and learning outcomes.

Key efficacy evidence

Highlights from the body of research supporting this program

Verification Study: Five schools, grades 3-8

The exploratory study took a sample of 141 students in Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington, with students stratified across grades 3-8. All students were at least two years below grade-level in reading and received intervention support, either through Response to Intervention (RTI) or special education processes.
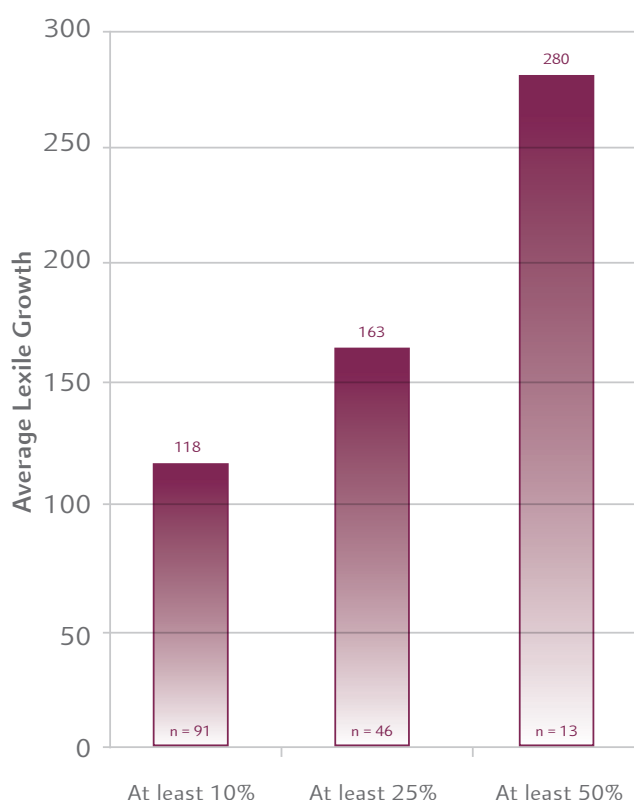
Students completed an average of approximately 22 percent of an academic year's worth of lessons and experienced an average Lexile growth of 87. Generally, students in those grades completing less than an average of 20 percent of an academic year's worth of lessons (i.e., grades 3, 4, and 6) demonstrated the lowest Lexile growth compared to students in the grades completing more than an average of 20 percent of an academic year's worth of lessons (i.e., grades 5, 7, and 8). Students in grade 5 experienced the greatest average Lexile growth (150) and completed a greater percentage of an academic year's worth of lessons than students in the other grades.

The correlation between Lexile growth and the percentage of an academic year's worth of lessons completed was statistically significant ($r = .62$, $n = 133$, $p < .01$ (two-tailed)). This result indicates that there is a statistically significant, positive relationship between Lexile growth and the percentage of an academic year's worth of lessons completed in *SRA FLEX Literacy*.

Students completing at least 10 percent of an academic year's worth of lessons demonstrated an average Lexile growth of 118. Students completing at least 25 percent of an academic year's worth of

lessons demonstrated an average Lexile growth of 163. Students completing at least 50 percent of an academic year's worth of lessons demonstrated an average Lexile growth of 280. There was a clear increase in Lexile growth when students completed more lessons. Students who completed at least 25 percent of an academic year's worth of lessons had a 38 percent greater Lexile growth than those students who completed at least 10 percent of those lessons. The greatest average increase occurred for those students who completed at least 50 percent of an academic year's worth of lessons—more than doubling the average Lexile growth of those who completed 10 percent of those lessons.

Average Lexile growth by percentage of an academic year's worth of lessons completed for all students

SRA Reading Mastery (K–5)

SRA Reading Mastery is a K–5 Direct Instruction literacy and language arts program. Its systematic, explicit instruction helps all students—even significantly at-risk students—become fluent, independent, and highly skilled readers. Built on the rigor of today's literacy standards, this program helps teachers:

- Maximize students' vocabulary.
- Track lesson progress online.
- Enhance comprehension with interactive whiteboard activities.

SRA Reading Mastery has been used successfully in thousands of schools across the country for more than 35 years.

The role of research

SRA Reading Mastery, which uses the Direct Instruction methodology, shows evidence of success in addressing phonemic awareness, word recognition, and phonics.

The large body of research that supports *SRA Reading Mastery* programs distinguishes them from all other reading programs. They are considered to be among the most successful and effective commercial reading programs available today (Briggs, K. & Clark, C., 1997).

Juniper Gardens Children's Project, University of Kansas

Given the urgency in addressing reading failures, the purpose of this investigation was to determine the effects of early literacy intervention in primary grades, applied within a three-tiered model, and to analyze curriculum intervention effects for students who have been determined to be the most at-risk in their kindergarten year. Thus, the purpose was to evaluate various types of interventions rather than to examine the three-tiered model itself. Research hypotheses were that, (a) intensive-level students enrolled in Direct Instruction as secondary - and tertiary-level interventions within a three-tiered model will demonstrate significantly more gains as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS; Kaminski & Good, 1998), over time than the students in the less structured curriculum, (b) intensive-level students enrolled in Direct Instruction secondary- and tertiary-level interventions will progress at a faster rate (as measured by slope) than students enrolled in a less structured curriculum, and (c) a larger percentage of students enrolled in Direct Instruction interventions will perform at benchmark levels on the DIBELS and Woodcock *Reading Mastery* assessments than students enrolled in less structured curriculum interventions.

Direct Instruction interventions were applied as secondary - and tertiary-level interventions in schools implementing a three-tiered model. Less structured curricula were applied as primary and secondary level interventions, in schools not applying a three-tiered model, and with variance in instructional content and group size.
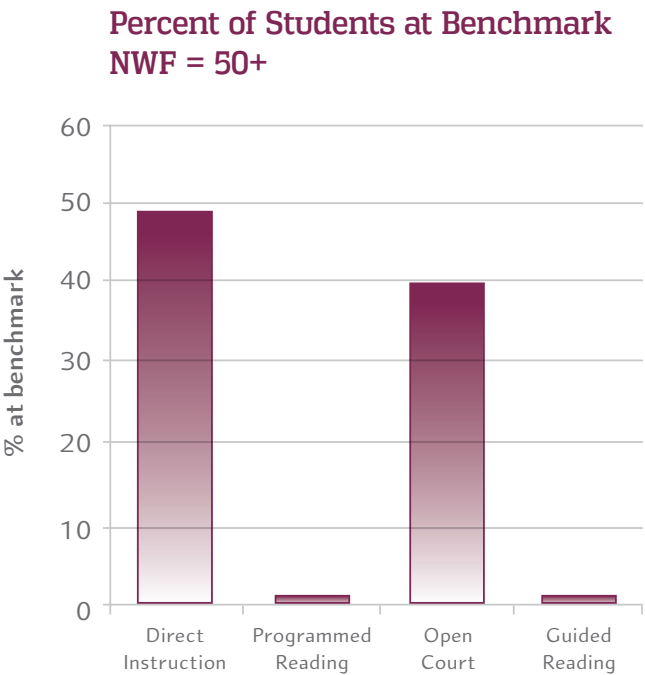
Intervention for the intensive-level students in the experimental schools in the study included the use of small instructional groups of 3-6 participating students to maintain low student–teacher ratios, combined with explicit phonemic awareness and phonics-based instruction. Interventions in the experimental schools were applied as part of a three-tiered model, with decisions for placement based on students' performance on DIBELS at

three points each year. Selected curricula in experimental schools were *Reading Mastery* (1995 edition), Early Interventions in Reading (Mathes & Torgesen, 2005), and Read Well (Sprick, Howard, & Fidanque, 1998). *Reading Mastery* (n = 5) and Early Interventions in Reading (n = 29) curricula were described as an "integrated curriculum" using Direct Instruction strategies, scripted lessons, teacher modeling, multiple activities with repeated practice to teach and reinforce new skills, and mastery learning. Read Well (n = 5) was also highly teacher-directed, using a mastery learning model, but without teacher scripts for conducting lessons. All three of these curricula were considered explicit in their instruction, and their data were analyzed together. A total of 39 students participated in these highly directed programs, referred to as Direct Instruction programs. Programmed Reading—a highly structured and sequenced curriculum—was used in small groups in one of the schools for nine of the students.

Key efficacy evidence

Highlights from the body of research supporting this program

In summary, the findings from this investigation are encouraging in that students with direct intervention improved in critical early literacy skills, and some even advanced to grade-level performance. Students enrolled in small groups using Direct Instruction curricula—*Reading Mastery* (1995), Early Interventions in Reading (Mathes & Torgesen, 2005) and Read Well (Sprick et al., 1998)—showed the most significant improvement with moderate-to-large effect sizes (see Figures 1 and 3). Findings further supported the use of other, more systematic curricula, including *Programmed Reading* and *Open Court*. These findings support other reports recommending evidence-based, explicit instruction in early school grades for at-risk students (Adams & Engelmann, 1996; Foorman et al., 1998; Frances, Shaywitz, Steubing, Shaywitz, & Fletcher, 1996; Juel, 1988; Snow, Barnes, & Griffin, 1998), as well as intensive intervention for high-risk groups (Mathes et al., 2005; Torgesen et al., 2001). Findings also suggest the utility of the three-tiered, RTI model to manage interventions, that is, determining for whom, when, and what intervention is appropriate, and monitoring progress through systematic data collection.

Percent of Students at Benchmark NWF = 50+

SRA Corrective Reading (3-12)

SRA Corrective Reading is a powerful Direct Instruction remedial reading series that solves a wide range of problems for struggling readers who are one or more years behind their peers—even if they have failed with other approaches. The program gives educators the tools to help close achievement gaps in decoding and comprehension.

SRA Corrective Reading provides sequenced lessons that range from simple to complex. Decoding and comprehension strands, which emphasize student success at every level, can be taught together or separately.

Program features include:

- Two major strands and four instructional levels to address a wide range of reading problems.
- Multiple points of entry to cater to skill levels of students from grades 3 to adult.
- Fully-integrated assessments to monitor progress and guide movement through the program.

The role of research

SRA Corrective Reading is based on the research and principles of the Direct Instruction method.

Remedial Reading Instruction Study, University of Washington-Tacoma

Scant research has been conducted on the effects of remedial reading instruction on the basic reading skills of elementary and middle school students with high-incidence disabilities, particularly those with

ED. In this context, there were two purposes of this study. The first purpose was to examine the effects of remedial reading intervention on the basic reading skills of elementary and middle school students with high-incidence disabilities. The second purpose was to examine the relative impact of remedial reading instruction on the basic reading skills of students with ED and LD. Several findings warrant discussion.

First, statistically and educationally significant improvements were found between students who received remedial reading instruction (n = 45) and those in the comparison condition (n = 23) on measures of basic reading skills. Participating students demonstrated statistically significant mean changes on the WJIII Basic Reading Skills cluster and associated subtests and the DIBELS ORF probe compared to those in the comparison condition. Moreover, the magnitude of the effect of remedial reading instruction on the basic reading skills and, more specifically, word attack skills was large (i.e., above .80). Thus, the effect of remedial reading instruction on the reading skills (i.e., basic reading skills and oral reading fluency) of participating students with high-incidence disabilities was educationally significant. This finding was heartening given that the reading difficulties of three out of four students with high-incidence disabilities will persist throughout their lives (NICHD, 2000).

Second, students with ED were more responsive than their LD counterparts on measures of basic reading skills. The word attack skills of students with ED improved from the low-average range at pretest to the average range. This finding was surprising given that many students with ED tend not to be as responsive to remedial reading instruction as their peers including those with LD (e.g., Anderson et al., 2001; Nelson, Benner, & Gonzalez, 2003; Trout et al., 2003). However, researchers have found that the core reading and prereading skills of students

with ED can be impacted through intensive reading instruction (Barton-Arwood et al., 2005; Nelson, Stage, Epstein, & Pierce, 2005; Torkelson-Trout et al., 2003). Corresponding with this study, effect sizes of teacher-mediated reading interventions on the reading skills of students with ED have ranged from 1.12 to 1.85 (Pierce, Reid, & Epstein, 2004).

received Corrective Reading significantly outperformed the comparison groups on standardized and curriculum-based reading measures, measures of social adjustment, and attendance (e.g., Benner, Kinder, Beaudoin, Stein, & Hirschmann, 2005; Lloyd, Cullinan, Heins, & Epstein, 1980; Marchand-Martella, Martella, Orlob, & Ebey, 2000).

Key efficacy evidence

Highlights from the body of research supporting this program

Discussion

Corrective Reading continues to show great promise in building the reading skills of students who have not been responsive to core or supplemental reading interventions. The empirical evidence demonstrating the efficacy of this program with struggling readers continues to mount (Grossen, 1998; Marchand-Martella, Martella, & Przychodzin-Havis, 2005). Indeed, the collective results of 21 peer-reviewed investigations demonstrate that students who

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