Transforming How Reading Is Taught: Partnerships to Change Policies, & Practice

Margie B. Gillis, Ed.D, CALT
President, Literacy How
Research Affiliate, Haskins Laboratories

New Haven Alders Hearing
May 25, 2022
Literacy is the language of opportunity.

Children are at the heart of all we do. We believe that every child has the right to read.
We know that 95% can be taught to read.
We believe that teachers—not programs or products—teach students to read, write and spell.

So we empower teachers with the best ways to teach.

Our Mission is to empower teachers to ensure that every child learns to read by third grade.
THE SCIENCE OF READING
Areas of the Brain Used for Reading

A modern vision of the cortical networks for reading

Access to pronunciation and articulation

Top-down attention and serial reading

Access to meaning

Visual word form area (« the brain’s letterbox »)

Dehaene, 2009
“Each new reader comes to reading with a ‘fresh’ brain -- one that is programmed to speak, see, and think, but not read. Reading requires the brain to rearrange its original parts to learn something new.”
(Maryanne Wolf)

“Teaching reading is rocket science.”
(Louisa Moats)

All students need to know the structure of the English language – that is, it is based on an alphabet (phonemic) and meaning (morpho). English is morphophonemic.
The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.

- conducted over the last five decades across the world,
- derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages.
- culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform
  - **how** proficient reading and writing develop;
  - **why** some have difficulty;
  - **how** we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.

*The Reading League*
APPLYING THE SCIENCE OF READING THROUGH PD
5 BIG IDEAS

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

PHONICS

FLUENCY

VOCABULARY

TEXT COMPREHENSION
A History Grounded in Research

2000 – *CT’s Blueprint for Reading Achievement*

2001-04 – Department of Ed funded *Early Reading Success*

2004-07 – IES funded *Mastering Reading Instruction*

2007-09 – Hartford Foundation funded *Haskins/Hartford Literacy Initiative*

2010-12 – Grossman Foundation funded *Turning the Curve*

2012-present – CT State Legislature funded *CT K-3 Literacy Initiative (now CT Literacy Model)*
Early Reading Success Institute (ERSI)

• Haskins Mentors worked with over 200 teachers in 20 schools in CT and Rhode Island.

• Mentors collaborated with researchers to develop PD models and tools for teacher training and established 3 CT Model Schools to serve as demonstration sites.
  • Worthington Hooker School in New Haven
  • Laurel School in Bloomfield
  • Sanchez School in Hartford
As a follow up to ERSI, a four-year Teacher Quality grant (funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, a division of the US DOE), launched *Mastering Reading Instruction (MRIn)* to inform higher education and policy-makers about how to train teachers to more effectively teach reading.
• Professional development and classroom support in 37 schools in nine districts with more than 120 1st grade teachers took place over two academic years, 2004-2006.

• All teachers in MRIn received the same professional development (PD) in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. Half had a Haskins mentor in the classroom to translate reading research into practice and received a second year of PD which included oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension.
Our Findings

Professional Development programs were very successful at building teachers’ knowledge, especially for teachers who were coached.

Significant correspondences were observed between teachers’ knowledge and teachers’ implementation of research-based methods of instruction.

The transfer to student learning took longer and required sustained coaching.

© Literacy How, 2022
Rogers International School

Prior to 2005, Rogers International School in Stamford was one of the lowest performing schools in the region.

Rogers 4th grade Total Reading CMT score in 2004 was 49.5% at goal. In 2009, it rose to 68% at goal.

Rogers K-3rd grade teachers were trained using the Mentor Model.

Rogers received the Lone Pine Award in 2007 for achieving the greatest academic gains in the region.
## 4th Grade CT Mastery Test Scores
### Rogers – State Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rogers Score</th>
<th>State Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006 – All Students</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 – Whites</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 – Hispanics</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 – All Students</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 – Whites</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 – Hispanics</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hartford Public Schools: Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

• A three-year grant funded by HFPG with a goal of strengthening reading in the early grades (2006 – 2009)
• K-2 teachers in five schools received job-embedded PD from Haskins Mentors
• Students in all three grades made significant gains from fall to spring.
• K students whose teachers had the most support made the greatest gains and finished the year with the highest scores.
Second Grade DRA2 Scores and Number of Years of HLI Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of HLI Experience</th>
<th>DRA Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No HLI</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Years</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates a significant difference compared to no HLI experience.
Literacy How Coaching Effects on Student Outcomes

• 23 teachers received *Literacy How* coaching and were observed using a literacy protocol to document specific teaching behaviors.

• 418 students in the 23 teachers’ classrooms were matched to 418 students to act as a control group. Matching was on Grade, Race, Gender, Special Education Status, and Lunch Status.

• A statistically significant difference was found between students in *Literacy How* coached classrooms and comparison students.
Foundations of Reading Test
MA Test of Education Licensure (MTEL 90)

- Required in MA since 2003
- Focuses on research-based knowledge of reading instruction (54% on PA, Phonics, and Vocabulary)
- MA 4th and 8th grade NAEP scores are the highest in the nation

- CT State Board of Ed ruled that all prospective PreK-6 teachers must take and pass the test effective July 1, 2009
- CT teachers are still required to take and pass the Praxis tests

© Literacy How, 2022
If prospective teachers are required to pass a dedicated, research-based test in reading instruction as a condition of licensure, school districts will be hiring new teachers who already possess fundamental knowledge of good reading instruction.

### CT Foundations of Reading Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># Test Takers</th>
<th>Total Passed</th>
<th>Percent Passed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© Literacy How, 2022
“The Commissioner of Education may identify schools to participate in a pilot study for the purposes of promoting best practices in early literacy and closing the academic achievement gaps...The Department of Education may research and evaluate participating schools and such research and evaluation may be conducted in conjunction with external groups or organizations. The commissioner may accept funds from private sources and from any state or federal grants.”
Purpose of Pilot Study

Compare DIBELS (universal screener) to DRA2 (business as usual) over two years.

Look at different effects between

(1) business as usual (Control Condition),

(2) alternative reading assessment (Treatment Condition)

(3) alternative reading assessment with job-embedded professional development (Treatment+Mentor Condition).
Results

Figure 2. Covariate adjusted marginal means for control (0), treatment (1), and treatment+mentor schools (2).

© Literacy How, 2022
‘The Department of Education shall develop or approve reading assessments ...to identify students in K-3rd grade, inclusive, who are below proficiency in reading.... to include frequent screening and progress monitoring of students. Such reading assessments shall (1) measure phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, (2) provide opportunities for periodic formative assessment during the school year, (3) produce data that is useful for informing individual and classroom instruction..., (4) be compatible with best practices in reading instruction and research.’
CT K-3 Reading Pilot

CK3LI Partner Schools

- Norris, Langford (East Hartford)
- Windham Center (Windham)
- Burns Latino Studies Academy (Hartford)
- Truman (New Haven)
- John Barry (Meriden)

CK3LI Leadership Team

- UConn: George Sugai, Michael Coyne, Ashley Oldham, Mari Cuticelli
- HILL for Literacy: Darci Burns
- Literacy How: Margie Gillis
Kindergarten Change in Risk Status

Winter 2013 to Winter 2014

(DIBELS PSF)

The Reading Achievement Gap
Partnering to Close the Achievement Gap

Black and Puerto Rican Caucus
CT Association of Public School Superintendents
CT Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity
Grossman Family Foundation
Hill for Literacy
Literacy How
State Department of Education
University of Connecticut – Neag School of Education

© Literacy How, 2022
The results of well designed and carefully controlled school-based studies suggest that at least 95% of the total student population can attain average word reading abilities with the implementation of intensive and systematic intervention.

Torgesen, 2004
Reading Intervention

• Instructional approaches and programs designed to either prevent or remediate persistent reading difficulties

• **Prevention** programs focus on at risk children with limited amounts of crucial reading-related knowledge, skills and experience at school entry.

• **Remedial** programs target students who are failing to make adequate progress in learning to read.

_Tunmer, 2008_

Intervention Planning and Implementation

Problem Identification
What is the problem?

Problem Analysis
Why is it happening?

Progress Monitoring
Did it work?

Plan Development and Implementation
What should be done about it?
STRUCTURED LITERACY: A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE
What is Structured Literacy?

*Structured Literacy* is characterized by the provision of systematic, explicit instruction that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing and emphasizes the *structure of language* across the speech sound system (*phonology*), the writing system (*orthography*), the structure of sentences (*syntax*), the meaningful parts of words (*morphology*), the relationships among words (*semantics*), and the organization of spoken and written discourse.

*IDA Brief*
Reaffirm the understanding that literacy embraces writing as well as reading, and encompasses all five essential components described in the National Reading Panel as crucial and inter-related. We will build upon those findings and heed the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth and the National Academies of Sciences by:

- Embracing the dual language brain;
- Scaffolding and targeting instruction for EL/EBs to bolster comprehension, participation, and language development;
- Supporting oral language development as the foundation for literacy; and
- Emphasizing the development of high levels of biliteracy.
Structured Literacy is an approach* to reading instruction where teachers carefully structure important literacy skills, concepts, and the sequence of instruction, to facilitate children’s literacy learning and progress as much as possible. This approach to reading instruction can be beneficial not only for students with reading disabilities, but also for other at-risk students including English learners and struggling adolescents (Baker et al., 2014; Gersten et al., 2008; Kamil et al., 2008; Vaughn et al., 2006).

* An approach uses a problem-solving process, with data at the center, to ensure that instruction is individualized for the needs/profiles of the students.
Balanced Literacy/Typical Literacy Practices

• Students are encouraged to use word analogies and pictures or context to identify words.

Instruction is focused on:

• *Shared reading* (e.g., the teacher reads aloud to students and asks questions about the text),

• *Guided reading* (e.g., students read texts at their current ability level and discuss them with the teacher in homogeneous groups), and

• *Independent reading* (e.g., students self-select books to read on their own).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured Literacy Practices</th>
<th>Typical Literacy Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning readers usually read decodable texts (texts largely controlled to specific phonics patterns that have been explicitly taught) that facilitate learning to apply phonics skills in reading texts.</td>
<td>Beginning readers usually read leveled and predictable texts (texts in which words are predictable based on sentence structure, repetition, or pictures) that do not easily lend themselves to application of phonics skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Spear-Swerling, 2019*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured Literacy Practices</th>
<th>Typical Literacy Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelling skills are taught explicitly and systematically with prerequisite skills taught first and with instruction in common spelling rules (e.g., rules for adding endings). Spelling instruction reinforces and extends what students learn in decoding.</td>
<td>Spelling is often not taught in an explicit or systematic manner. Students may learn word lists in which words exemplify no particular phonics pattern or spelling rule. Spelling program may be completely distinct from decoding program with different words in the two programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Spear-Swerling, 2019*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured Literacy Practices</th>
<th>Typical Literacy Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher levels of literacy are explicitly and systematically taught (e.g., sentence structure, paragraphs, discourse), including prerequisite skills.</td>
<td>Some higher levels of literacy may be explicitly taught but usually not systematically and not with strong attention to prerequisite skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Spear-Swerling, 2019*
Five Features of Effective PD

- Focus on Content (how students learn the content)
- Active Learning (teachers observe, receive feedback, and analyze student work)
- Coherence: PD goals are aligned to the school curriculum and goals
- Sustained duration: Ongoing throughout the year and beyond
- Collective participation: Ts from one grade level participate together to build an interactive learning community

Desimone and Pak, 2017
One Teacher at a Time

“Teaching is one of the most cognitively complex professions... there is still uncertainty as to what works in various schools in diverse communities with each unique group of students... what makes teaching a profession is the continual inquiry, expansion of repertoire, and accumulation of knowledge through practice.”

Costa and Garmston, 2016
A Research-Based Program Can Help Tremendously

• Program developers do work for us
• Using a program encourages cognitive planning
• Building from scratch can be problematic

National Center on Intensive Intervention
http://www.intensiveintervention.org/
The Right to Read Act

https://www.righttoreadct.org

Every CT student has a right to read...
and there’s a right way to teach them.

© Literacy How, 2022
Thank You!

margiegillis@literacyhow.com

Visit our website: www.literacyhow.org

Follow us on Twitter, Facebook & Instagram
Sign up for our newsletter.

© Literacy How, 2022