

SUMMER SCHOOL LITERACY & PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROJECT 2024



RANDOLPH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Randolph Public Schools

SUMMER SCHOOL LITERACY AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The Summer School Literacy and Professional Learning Grant (SSLPL) is an initiative designed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to both maximize literacy achievement in extended school year programs and provide educators with professional development in evidence-based literacy practices. Approximately 86 educators across four different summer program sites participated in the 2024 program. This is an increase from the 2023 program during which 26 teachers participated at the Brockton Public School site only. The SSLPL program is facilitated through a partnership between local educational agencies including HILL for Literacy and Crafting Minds and hosted by the Randolph Public Schools.

Each day, students received a half-day of structured literacy instruction. The SSLPL also provided comprehensive professional development to the Randolph educators and education assistants who taught in the summer school program. They received 45 hours of professional development, including two days of initial training, weekly professional development meetings, and daily individualized instructional coaching support.

Literacy Success is Critical and Urgent

Proficient reading is essential for success in school and later in life (Snow, 2002). Early reading success is predictive of positive academic outcomes and children who struggle in reading may encounter long-term negative effects (McMaster et al., 2014; Snow, 2002). In 2022, The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported that only 33% of fourth graders were at or above the proficient level in reading indicating that a substantial number of students in the United States are reading below grade level and therefore at risk for future academic difficulties (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

The NAEP 2022 results for Massachusetts fourth grade students were more positive than the national average of 43% of fourth graders at or above proficient level in reading. However, there are still a significant number of students who are reading below grade level. Most notably, multilingual learners who qualify as English learners (ELs) in both grades four and eight scored lower than ELs nationally. In fourth grade the percentage of EL students that were at or above proficient was 11% nationally versus 6% in Massachusetts. In eighth grade the percentage of EL students that were at or above proficient was 5% nationally versus 1% in Massachusetts (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022).





Maximizing Student Learning with Structured Literacy Instruction

Structured literacy instruction is fundamental to ensuring all students learn to read proficiently. Structured literacy is a term coined by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) in 2016 to function as an umbrella term for the evidence-based reading methods that have proven to be effective for teaching reading to all students, especially those with reading difficulties and dyslexia. Structured literacy instruction involves the teaching of key literacy skills that are most critical to reading success, and the methods of instruction that are most effective.

What to Teach

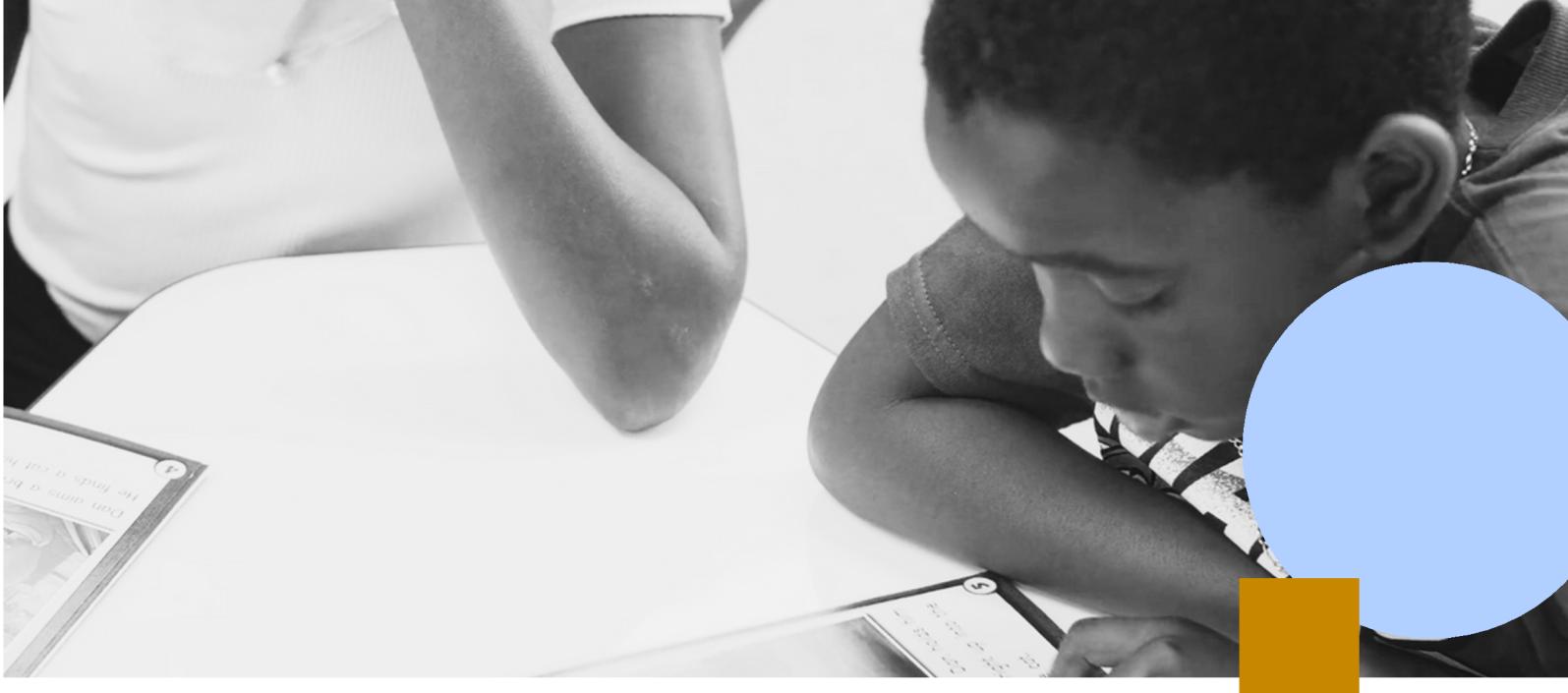
The Simple View of Reading is one helpful model for illustrating the two essential areas of literacy instruction: word recognition and language comprehension (Gough and Tunmer, 1986; Hoover and Tunmer, 2020). Word recognition is the ability to decode the written word and language comprehension is the ability to understand what is spoken. These components work together and both are critical to reading comprehension. The most effective methods for helping students become automatic word readers is to teach them phonemic awareness and decoding skills, and to provide sufficient practice opportunities for students to apply those skills to accurately and fluently reading connected text (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000). There are many important components of building students' language comprehension abilities as well, including vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and listening comprehension skills (Kim, 2016).

How to Teach

How to teach these critical literacy skills is just as important as what to teach. Structured literacy instruction is explicit and systematic. A robust body of evidence has found that explicit and systematic instruction is most effective for preventing and ameliorating reading difficulties (Gersten et al., 2009).

Lessons that follow the principles of explicit and systematic instruction have clear objectives, follow a logical scope and sequence, and skills, concepts, and routines are structured from simple to complex (Carnine et al., 2006). Lessons are also structured in a way that students are able to practice skills in

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both a cumulative and distributed manner to consolidate learning (Young & Hasbrouck, 2024). In delivering explicit and systematic instruction, the instructor provides clear models, deliberately selected examples, high rates of practice opportunities, and immediate corrective feedback (Baker et al., 2010; Coyne et al., 2011; Cuticelli, et al., 2015; Ellis & Worthington, 1994).

Building Capacity for Structured Literacy Instruction - The Importance of Professional Development

The need to teach reading effectively and meet the needs of all learners is critical and urgent. However, teaching reading is difficult and teachers require considerable support to provide effective reading instruction. Moreover, many educator preparation programs do not provide training in quality structured literacy instruction, making professional development even more important. The National Council on Teacher Quality (2018) found that less than a quarter of the graduate elementary education programs that they surveyed (210 programs) teach scientifically based methods of early reading instruction (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2018).

Snow (2002) defines excellent teaching as teachers who are “well-prepared, highly knowledgeable, and receiving ongoing support,” (p. 6). Professional development is a critical component in improving teacher knowledge and quality of instruction. Improving teachers’ use of evidence-based practices, and fidelity of implementation, is analogous with increasing student achievement (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). It is also true that when teachers implement reading practices inconsistently, students demonstrate lower academic outcomes (e.g., Furtak at al., 2008). **Research suggests that teachers need sustained support to implement evidence-based reading strategies (e.g., DiGennaro, Martens, & Kleinmann, 2007).**

Researchers have identified specific conditions where professional development may produce positive results (Desimone, 2009; Wayne et al., 2008; Kraft et al., 2018). For example, Yoon and colleagues (2007) conducted a literature review of studies of professional development that positively impacted student outcomes. Key characteristics of professional development across the studies included: (a) workshops; (b) outside experts; (c) ongoing delivery; (d) follow-up support; (e) activities in context; and (f) content.



The Randolph Public Schools SSLPL Method

The SSLPL program in Randolph was designed to both provide structured literacy instruction for summer school participants and to provide teachers with the training and support to deliver this instruction effectively, both during the summer school program, and afterward in their teaching during the school year. The details of the program methodology are described below.

Students' Instruction

HILL Foundational Skills Lesson Plans

To build students' word recognition skills, students received explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency, using HILL for Literacy's Foundational Skills Lesson Plan (FSLP). Teachers provided 30 minutes of daily instruction using HILL FSLPs in homogenous small groups. HILL FSLPs are strong examples of explicit and systematic teaching. HILL FSLPs can follow the systematic phonics scope and sequence of a core reading program or they can be used for remediation for students who need an adapted scope and sequence to address their specific needs. HILL FSLPs can be used with any decodable text. They also help teachers deliver instruction explicitly through the use of consistent and efficient instructional routines.

Research suggests that teachers need sustained support to implement evidence-based reading strategies (e.g., DiGennaro, Martens, & Kleinmann, 2007).

Students were placed into homogeneous groups based on their Spring DIBELS scores and consultation with HILL facilitators and SSLPL coaches. For rising fourth and fifth grade students Spring DIBELS scores and Quick Phonics Screener (QPS; Hasbrouck, 2011) scores were analyzed for student groupings. Decodable texts that were utilized were 95% Group passages that align with Randolph's phonics scope and sequence and additional High Noon decodable texts were purchased.

Vocabulary and Comprehension Read Aloud

To build students' vocabulary and comprehension skills, students also received daily read aloud instruction for approximately thirty minutes. Read alouds have evidence for building students' language comprehension skills. This is because students are exposed to more complex language and vocabulary than the text they read on their own and the spoken language they hear throughout a typical day. The most effective read alouds are interactive. This means that both teachers and students are actively engaged in the text by thinking and talking throughout the read aloud. The lesson is thoughtfully planned out and incorporates queries to immerse the learner (Wright, 2018). Read alouds are an interactive way to engage and model for students the thinking that needs to go into every text as we are reading. Essentially, read alouds help students to shift the paradigm of learning to read to reading to learn (Chall, 1983).

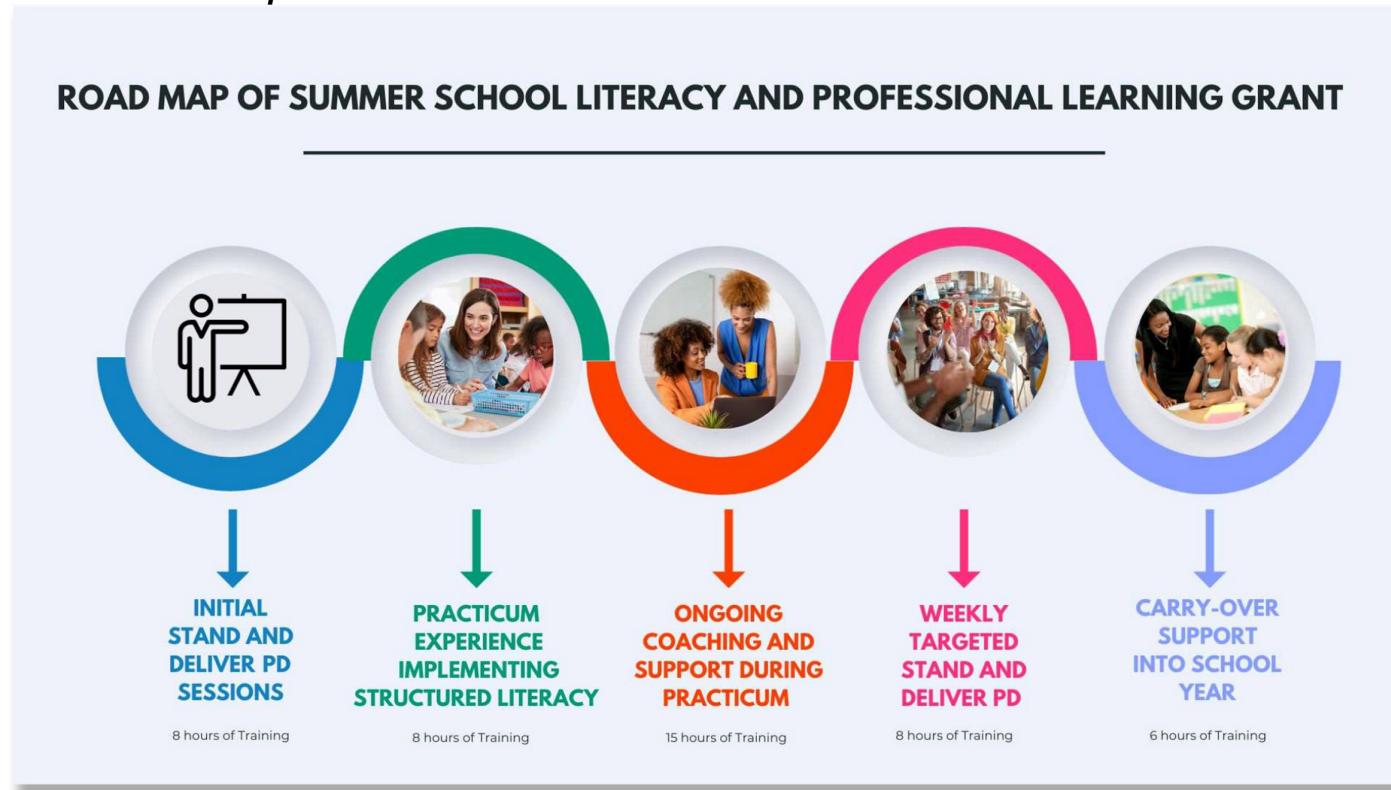
Professional Learning and Coaching

The primary focus of the SSLPL was to provide professional development in two significant ways: (1) build teacher background knowledge in the science of reading and (2) embedded coaching to deliver structured literacy effectively. Participating educators received 45 hours of training through lesson delivery and embedded coaching.

First, educators participated in an initial stand and deliver PD session (8 hours) which incorporated the what, why, and how to teach HILL FSLPs with multiple practice opportunities for participants to receive feedback prior to implementation with students. Teachers then engaged in embedded practice (at least 8 hours) and received ongoing support through coaching (15 hours) and weekly staff meetings and professional development (8 hours). HILL for Literacy facilitators supported both coaches and teachers through modeling, providing specific feedback, and supported teachers in instructional planning. Teachers received some form of coaching on a daily basis. Coaches utilized a coaching log to document attendance as well as the type of coaching teachers received each day. Coaching support received included (a) modeling, (b) various coaching tips and techniques, (c) feedback provided via email, (d) material preparation, (e) sharing an asynchronous training, (f) professional development, (g) data and grouping discussions, and (h) observing and providing feedback. Finally, support for teachers continues into the school year by attending a course with a focus on concepts such as sight word recognition, vocabulary, and oral language development (6 hours).



Chart 1: Road Map of SSLPL Grant



Graduate Course

Educators from all four sites were provided the opportunity to participate in a graduate course worth 3 graduate credits. The graduate course extended participant learning in a variety of ways. The course was designed to deepen participants' understanding of reading development beyond the training afforded during the summer program, and to ensure all participants received critical information about the stages of word recognition and the means for differentiating tier 2 reading instruction.

The educators who also enrolled in graduate credit participated in a variety of additional instructional components including: self-guided coursework (5 hours) on the stages of word recognition and important components of MTSS as related to reading development; live classes during the school year that offered guidance on differentiating small group instruction (5 hours), and assignments (10 hours) which supported the consolidation of their learning.

In order to achieve the course goals, coursework, discussions, and assignments were designed to support the following objectives.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the stages of word recognition.
- Discuss the essential components of reading instruction according to the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) and their role in classroom English Language Arts (ELA) instruction across elementary school.
- Identify the important characteristics of instructional structures (e.g. whole group, small group, independent work) within an ELA Block with a particular focus on structured literacy instruction.
- Interpret early literacy screening data to identify students at-risk for reading difficulties and group students by instructional focus area (e.g. accuracy, fluency, comprehension).
- Plan targeted small group instruction based on students' focus areas.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the principles and components of Structured Literacy.
- Plan targeted small group structured literacy lessons to support students' reading development in elementary school.

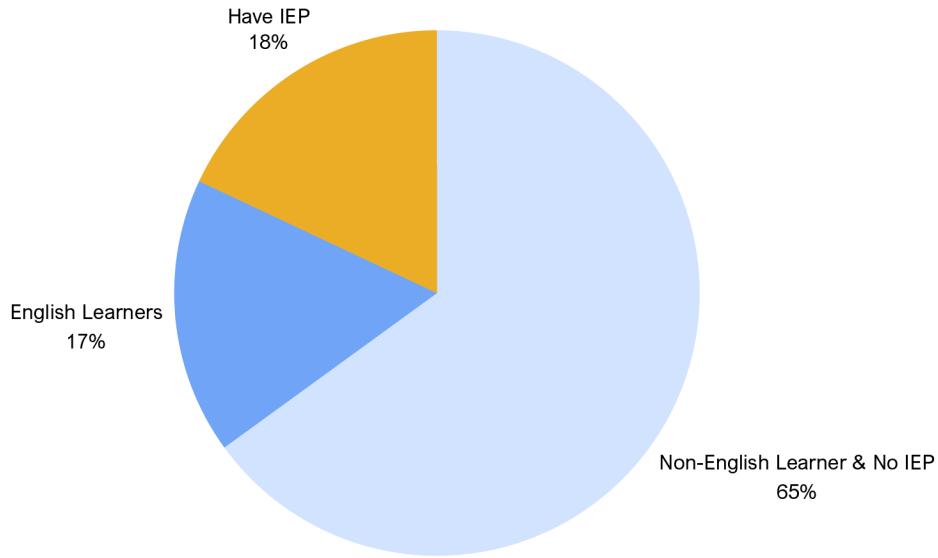


2024 SSLPL Results

Approximately 220 Randolph students participated in the program. There were about 45 rising first graders, 50 rising second graders, 57 rising third graders, 34 rising fourth graders, and 32 rising fifth graders. On average, students attended the program 76% of days. It is important to note that students were not recruited based on reading skill, and students entered the program with a variety of skill levels.

Based on demographic information provided by Randolph Public Schools, 17% of students participating in the summer program qualified as English Learners and 18% had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) through the special education department.

Chart 2: Student Demographics



Students were administered the DIBELS 8 end of the year benchmark test for both the pre-test and post-test. Rising first graders were administered the Kindergarten test, rising second graders were administered the First Grade test, rising third graders were administered the Second Grade test, rising fourth graders were administered the Third Grade test, and rising fifth graders were administered the Fourth Grade test. DIBELS 8 is a valid and reliable screener that measures the acquisition of literacy skills (University of Oregon, 2018-2020). The pre-test scores were provided by the district, after district staff administered them in May. The summer school coaches administered the post-test scores during the last week of the program in late July.



DIBELS Results

To examine whether there was growth in students' change in DIBELS scores from the pre-test in May to the post-test in August, the means for pre-test and post-test were compared and two-tailed paired samples t-tests were analyzed. Results for each grade level are presented in Tables 1-5.

Results revealed that for most DIBELS subtests, the average post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores. The growth was statistically significant for Word Reading Fluency for rising first and second graders, suggesting that students' automatic word recognition skills improved over the course of the summer program. As described earlier in this brief, automatic word recognition is fundamental to students' development of reading proficiency (Hoover and Tunmer, 2020; NICHD, 2000).

The statistically significant growth in Oral Reading Fluency-Words Correct for rising third graders also suggests that their ability to read grade level text fluently improved over the summer. Oral Reading Fluency is a strong enabler and predictor of reading comprehension (University of Oregon, 2018-202). For rising fifth graders, there was small but statistically significant growth in Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy scores, which indicates improvement in student's ability to read grade level text with higher accuracy. The ability to read text accurately and fluently enables students to focus their attention on reading for meaning.

The growth was statistically significant for Word Reading Fluency for rising first and second graders, suggesting that students' automatic word recognition skills improved. The statistically significant growth in Oral Reading Fluency-Words Correct for rising third graders also suggests that their ability to read grade level text fluently improved.

The average composite scores, which are a summary of the DIBELS subtests, also grew in all grades except for the rising fifth graders. However, the growth observed was not statistically significant. Stronger results were expected based on the results from past summer school literacy initiatives facilitated by DESE and HILL for Literacy: namely, the SSLPL in Brockton Public Schools in the summer of 2023, and the Summer Institute for Literacy Leadership in Somerville Public Schools in 2019. These summer school programs used the same program structure and instructional resources and observed statistically significant growth in students' DIBELS scores across most measures (Orkin et al., 2013; Orkin et al., 2019). It is important to note that these past literacy initiatives focused on younger students, and remediation with upper elementary grade level students requires more intensity to address a wider gap.

There are some limitations to the analysis, which may have contributed to less than expected growth observed in the DIBELS data. First, the sample sizes per grade level were small, especially for rising fourth and fifth graders, making it more difficult to detect a statistically significant effect. Another factor to consider is that there was a significant lapse in time between the pre-test scores in May and when the program started in July. It is possible, although we cannot be sure, that students' scores were higher in May than when they entered the program in July. If this is true, growth would be underestimated. Another confounding factor is that the tests were administered with unknown reliability. It is possible that students' scores at either pre-test or post-test do not adequately reflect students' skills. In the future, we recommend that students are tested immediately before the program begins and that reliability checks are conducted during pre- and post-test data collection.

Table 1: DIBELS Results for Rising First Graders (45 Students)

DIBELS Subtest	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	t-statistic	p-value
Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)	49.91	46.05	-3.27	-1.94	.06
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	43.02	46.68	4.27	1.71	.09
Nonsense Word Fluency-Correct Letter Sounds (NWF-CLS)	40.76	47.56	4.97	1.58	.12
Nonsense Word Fluency-Words Recoded Correctly (NWF-WRC)	11.15	13.44	1.89	1.77	.09
Word Reading Fluency (WRF)	16.76	24.08	4.74	3.64	< .05
Composite	438.00	444.73	6.27	1.82	.07



Table 2 - DIBELS Results for Rising Second Graders (50 Students)

DIBELS Subtest	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	t-statistic	p-value
Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)	65.92	64.74	-1.37	-.81	.42
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	59.59	55.82	-5.21	-1.71	.09
Nonsense Word Fluency-Correct Letter Sounds (NWF-CLS)	80.22	83.26	4.34	1.45	.16
Nonsense Word Fluency-Words Recoded Correctly (NWF-WRC)	24.59	24.79	.47	.43	.67
Word Reading Fluency (WRF)	36.94	42.821	5.26	3.53	< .05
Oral Reading Fluency -Words Correct	63.02	67.82	5.05	1.82	.07
Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy	87.92	89.55	.95	.55	.59
Composite	468.96	473.50	4.95	1.99	.05



Table 3 - DIBELS Results for Rising Third Graders (57 Students)

DIBELS Subtest	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	t-statistic	p-value
Nonsense Word Fluency-Correct Letter Sounds (NWF-CLS)	116.47	117.73	.19	.05	.96
Nonsense Word Fluency-Words Recoded Correctly (NWF-WRC)	36.02	36.33	-.06	-.05	.96
Word Reading Fluency (WRF)	56.14	60.15	2.87	1.96	.05
Oral Reading Fluency-Words Correct	104.93	114.25	6.31	2.40	> .05
Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy	95.24	95.33	-.93	-1.04	.30
MAZE	11.38	12.78	.85	.94	.35
Composite	461.12	464.96	.19	.05	.96

Table 4 - DIBELS Results for Rising Fourth Graders (34 Students)

DIBELS Subtest	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	t-statistic	p-value
Nonsense Word Fluency-Correct Letter Sounds (NWF-CLS)	112.76	120.86	4.57	.91	.37
Nonsense Word Fluency-Words Recoded Correctly (NWF-WRC)	33.26	36.54	2.53	1.75	.09
Word Reading Fluency (WRF)	48.59	50.96	3.07	1.40	.17
Oral Reading Fluency -Words Correct	101.24	102.23	.39	.12	.90
Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy	97.41	96.39	-.79	-1.04	.31
MAZE	13.5	13.88	.55	.75	.46
Composite	438.91	443.14	2.71	.97	.34

Table 5 - DIBELS Results for Rising Fifth Graders (32 Students)

DIBELS Subtest	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	t-statistic	p-value
Oral Reading Fluency -Words Correct	108.69	108.88	3.4	1.25	.22
Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy	96.12	97.4	2.08	4.22	< .05
MAZE	16.37	17.25	1.08	.84	.41
Composite	428.75	425.58	-.81	-.18	.86



More Students Meeting Benchmark

Another important way to view students' reading growth over the course of the summer is to see if the percentage of students meeting DIBELS 8 End of Year Benchmark goals increased. The results of these analyses are shown in Figures 1-5. **Overall, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding DIBELS benchmark goals (shown in green and blue) increased notably from pre-test to post-test.** On the DIBELS 8 composite score, the most robust indicator of reading skill, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the end of year benchmark increased in all grade levels, except for rising fifth graders. For example, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding benchmark on the composite increased from 66% to 74% for rising second graders. When analyzing growth on specific DIBELS 8 subtests, one notable increase was the percentage of rising first graders who met or exceeded benchmark on Nonsense Word Fluency-Words Recoded Correctly (NWF-WRC), a key measure of students' decoding skills. NWF-WRC rose from 61% to 78% for rising first graders. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding benchmark on Word Reading Fluency (WRF) were also meaningful in multiple grade levels: from 53% to 63% for rising second graders, from 68% to 75% for rising third graders, and from 38% to 50% for rising fourth graders. These results suggest that more students will enter the next school year reading at grade-level.

Figure 1: Percentage of Rising First Graders Meeting DIBELS Benchmark Goals Increase

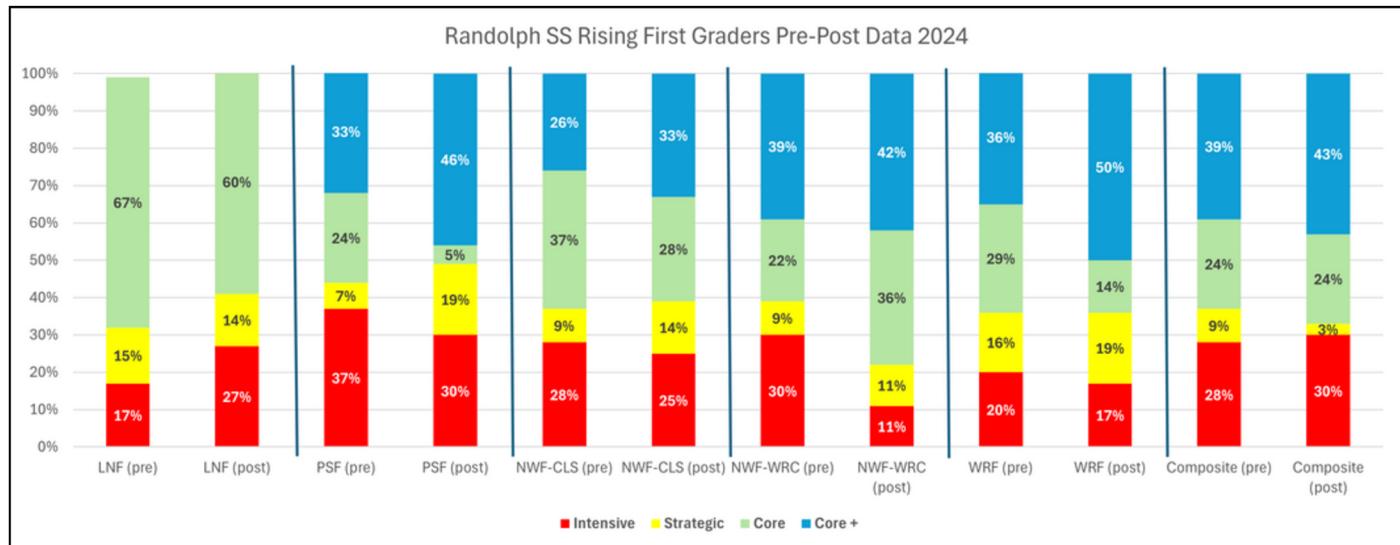


Figure 2: Percentage of Rising Second Graders Meeting DIBELS Benchmark Goals Increase

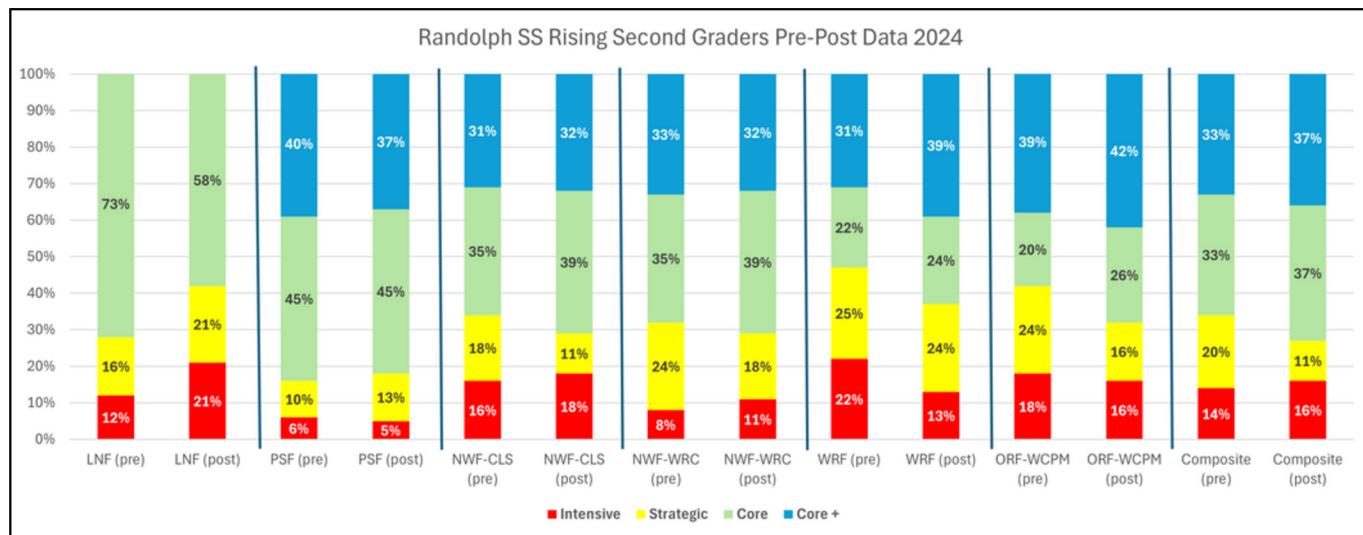


Figure 3: Percentage of Rising Third Graders Meeting DIBELS Benchmark Goals Increase

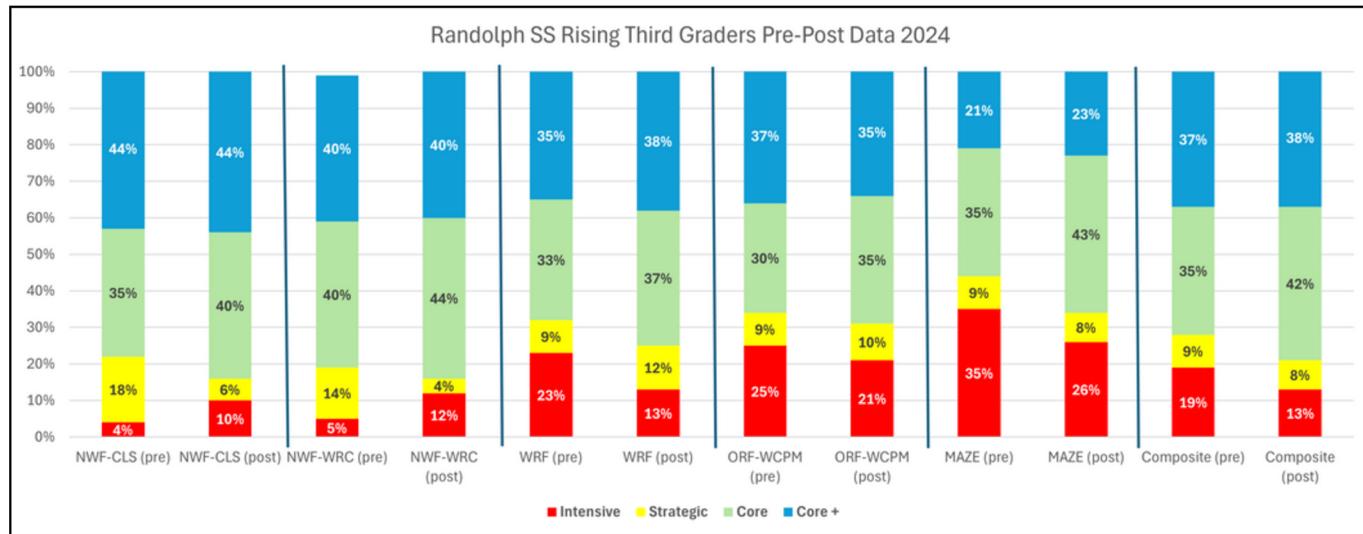


Figure 4: Percentage of Rising Fourth Graders Meeting DIBELS Benchmark Goals Increase

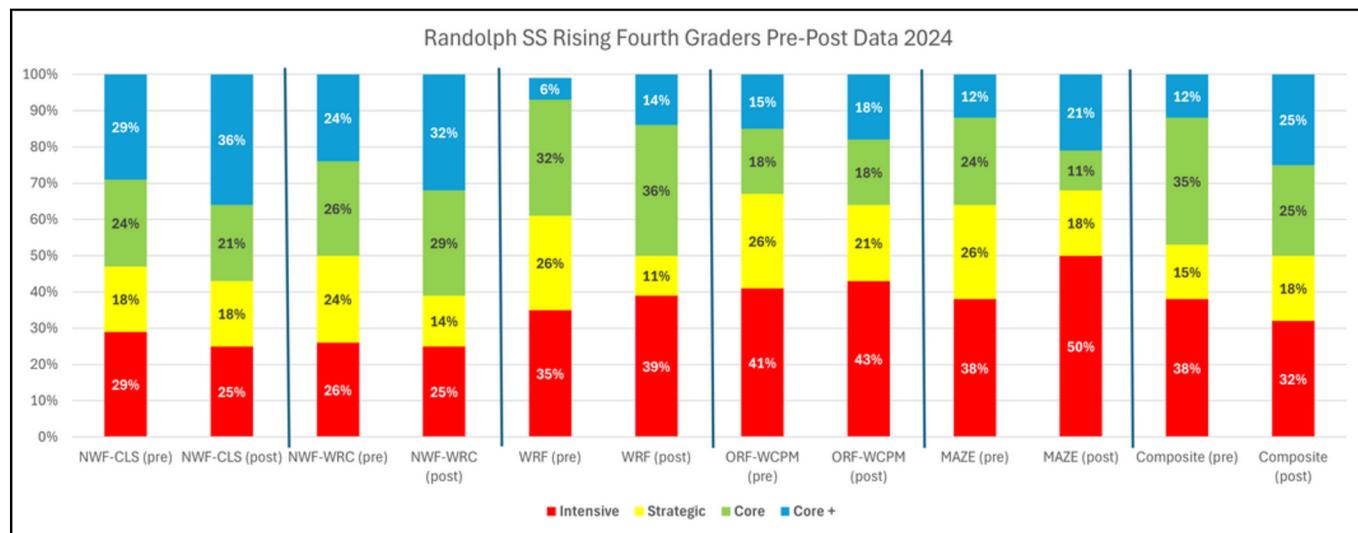
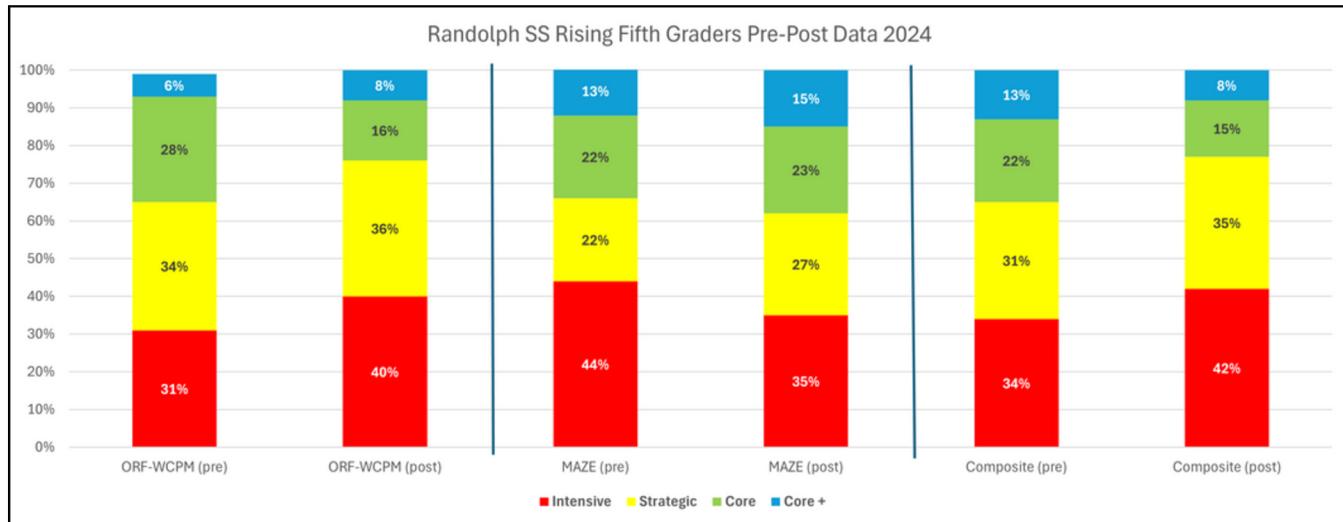


Figure 5: Percentage of Rising Fifth Graders Meeting DIBELS Benchmark Goals Increase



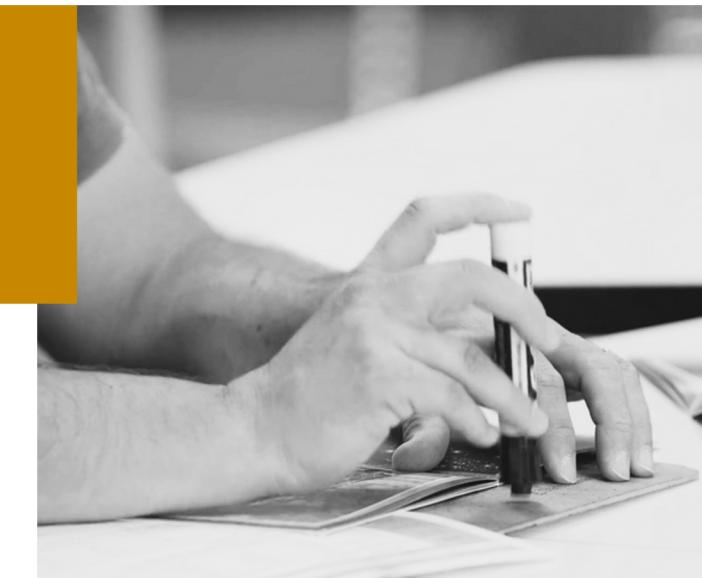
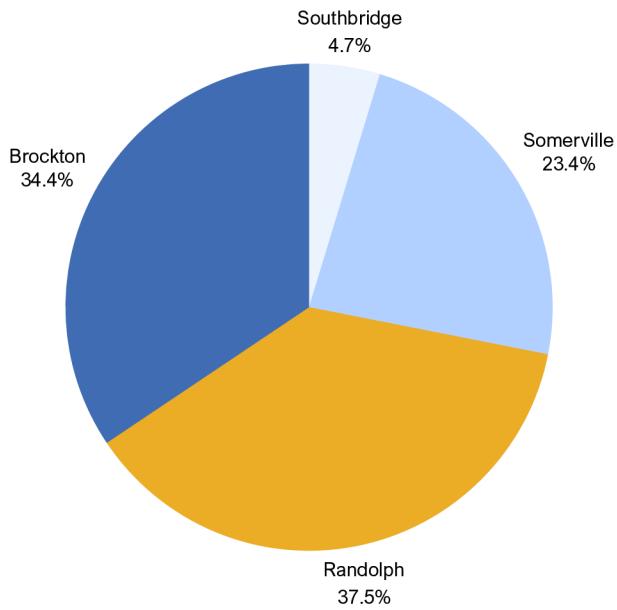
Implementation Results

The results from coach observations showed that teachers were able to implement the structured literacy HILL FSLP with high levels of fidelity and skill. As part of the coursework during the summer, teacher participants had the opportunity to write a structured literacy lesson plan using the HILL FSLP and plan for differentiation. Each teacher was observed by a coach and provided feedback, either written or oral. Then, teachers wrote a second lesson for the next day and incorporated the feedback from their coach. On the second day, coaches conducted a formal observation using the grade-level HILL FSLP matrix and scored the lesson out of 40 points. Teachers' average score was 89%, indicating a high level of fidelity of implementation. Teachers then submitted both lesson plans and included a reflection that addressed what they adjusted in the lesson plan and why.

Professional Learning Results

The majority of participating educators from all four sites (69) enrolled in the graduate course and (62) completed the course. Of the educators who did not enroll in the 2024 graduate course, a substantial portion (6) participated in the same graduate class during the 2023 SSLPL program. Across the four program sites the number of participants varied; Brockton (22); Randolph (23); Somerville (14); and Southbridge (3).

Chart 2: Graduate Course Participants by District



At the conclusion of the institute, teachers' experiences were collected through two methods: an assessment of knowledge and reflection assignments.

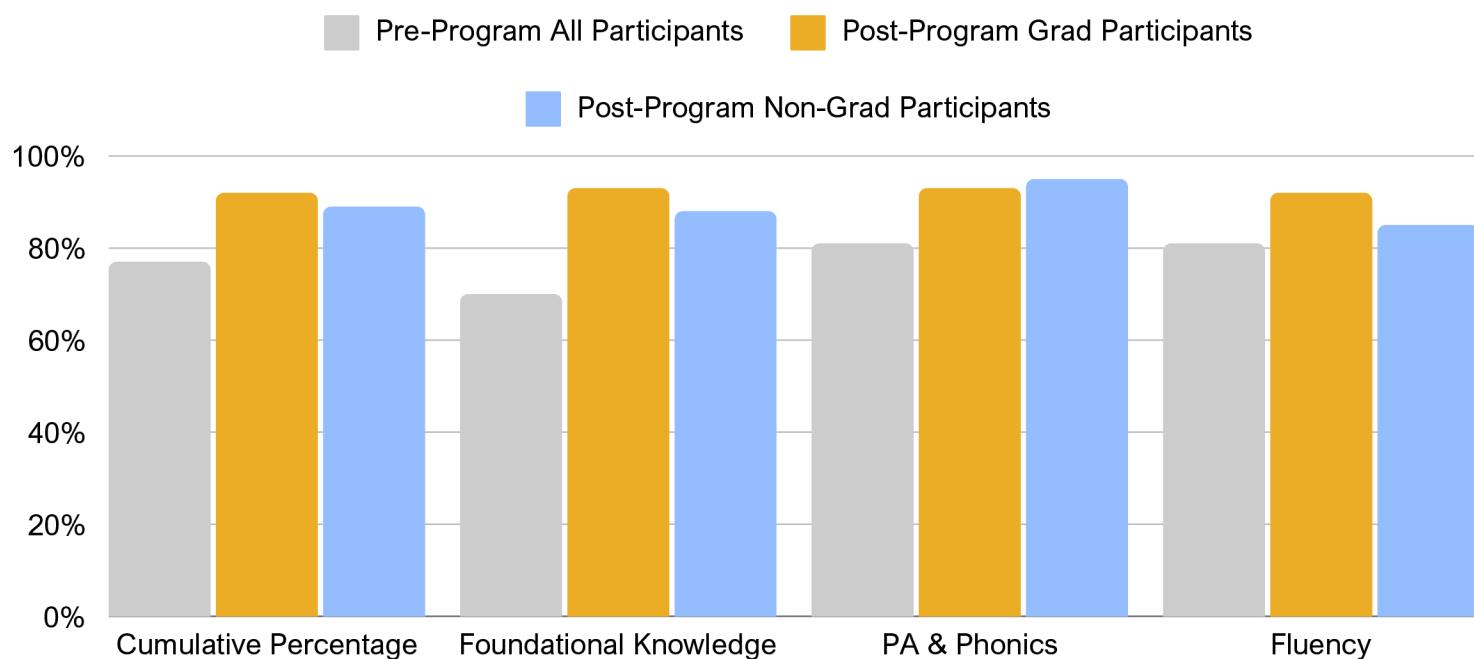
Formal Assessment. As part of the formal assessment, teachers were administered a pre/post survey to assess their growth of knowledge. The survey consisted of 20 questions that followed a multiple choice and true/false format. Questions were organized around three themes: foundational knowledge of word recognition; key ideas in phonemic awareness and phonics development; and key ideas in fluency development.



Teacher results are reported in two groups: educators who did not participate in the graduate course (11) and educators who participated in the graduate course (57 educators). **It is important to note that 6 of the 11 educators (54%) who did not take the course for graduate credit in 2024 had participated in the same graduate course in 2023.*

The majority of educators completed the pre-assessment (76; 88%) and the post-assessment (68; 79%). The impact of the graduate course was partially interpreted by comparing the proficiency rate of educators who participated in the coursework (57 educators) and those who did not enroll (11 educators). Both groups of educators appeared to grow in their knowledge as a result of their participation in the institute. Participation in the graduate program benefited from additional coursework in the areas of foundational knowledge and fluency skills. However, they may have needed more support in developing their phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge. On average both groups of participants demonstrated proficiency (>85%) in the skills assessed at the conclusion of the coursework.

Chart 3: Knowledge Growth Among Graduate Program & Non-Graduate Program Participants



Educators' Self-Reflections

Participants from the graduate program also shared feedback from their experiences in the program through a self-reflection assignment. Common themes that emerged from the self-reflections include the value of:

- Real-time coaching while implementing new pedagogical strategies (33 participants)
- Examples of differentiating or modeling instruction for students (27 participants)
- Connecting the “science” to “instruction” (20 participants)
- Delivering consistent routines and streamlined teacher language (19 participants)

Additionally, several participants (10) noted a need for extended discussions about meeting the needs of language learners, connecting word reading to language comprehension (8), and strategies for improving students’ written expression beyond spelling (5).

Examples of Participant Feedback and Reflections



I absolutely loved this process and have translated this into my everyday practices based off my students’ area of need. All my students are participating and are thriving with the consistency, multiple oral interactions/participations. I had always struggled with the irregular words, this practice has greatly impacted my ability to teach them these words.



Before taking this course and learning about how a student learns to read, I saw many teachers (years ago) using memorization to learn sight words. Students were shown whole words and they were expected to learn them by frequent presentation by the teacher, using the words at daily centers, and reading them around the school building. However, according to David Kilpatrick, visual memory is essential for learning letters, but it is not how words are stored in the brain. Instead we have to work with patterns of letters like rime patterns, and the sequence of sounds.



One instructional strategy I used during my Summer practicum was succinct language. Had I not followed the FSLP script, I’m certain I would have never made it through an entire FSLP lesson. I learned to keep my statements brief and to stick to the script with fidelity. I also implemented the instructional strategy of gradual release. I learned that I was repeating the Dictation sentence portion of the FSLP lesson far too much. I wanted students to learn to recall the sentence, and instead of repeating it for them, I prompted them to repeat what they remembered. We worked together to recall the dictation sentence.



Although hesitant at first, this practicum has really opened my eyes to the world of reading instruction. As an upper level elementary teacher my view of phonics scared me. It is the building blocks of making students fluent readers. This practicum gave me the time to dive deep into the FSLP, learn and practice the steps, and provided me with resources to make my small groups successful. Now that I am back in my regular school year, I am using the knowledge from the practicum and implementing it into my small groups.

Summary

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in conjunction with Randolph Public Schools, HILL for Literacy, and Crafting Minds, collaborated to provide a summer school program that could support both teachers and students to address ongoing, critical issues in the field. Such issues include lack of teacher support for implementation, the negative impact of summer slide on student reading achievement, and the static reading achievement across the nation.

Teacher Support for Implementation

During the month-long (4.5 weeks in July and early August) summer program in Randolph Public

Schools, 21 teachers received extensive training and embedded coaching support to provide high quality structured literacy instruction to approximately 45 rising first graders, 50 rising second graders, 57 rising third graders, 34 rising fourth graders, and 32 rising fifth graders.

Student Reading Achievement

The results that compared pre- and post-test means on DIBELS 8 literacy assessments revealed that for most DIBELS measures, the average post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores. Sample sizes for the analyses were small, but results were statistically significant for several key measures, including Word Reading Fluency for rising first and second graders and Oral Reading Fluency-Words Correct for rising third graders. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding DIBELS benchmark goals, shown in Figures 1-5, also increased notably from pre-test to post-test. On the DIBELS 8 composite score, the most robust indicator of reading skill, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the end of year benchmark increased in all grade levels, except for rising fifth graders. Increases in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding benchmark goals on Word Reading Fluency were also notable for rising second-graders, third-graders, and fourth-graders, and were substantial for Nonsense Word Fluency-Words Recoded Correctly for rising first graders.

The growth in Nonsense Word Fluency and Word Reading Fluency scores suggests that there was improvement in students' automatic word recognition skills over the course of the summer program. Accuracy and automaticity of decoding is critical to the development of reading proficiency and was a key focus of the summer school instruction (Hoover and Tunmer, 2020; NICHD, 2000).

Professional Learning Summary

As part of the SSLPL program, educators from all four sites participated in a pre/post knowledge survey. Results indicate that both groups of educators, those who engaged in the graduate program and those who did not, increased their understanding in foundational knowledge of word recognition; key ideas in phonemic awareness and phonics development; and key ideas in fluency development. Educators who participated in the graduate program benefited from additional coursework in the areas of foundational knowledge and fluency skills.





In addition, educators who participated in the graduate program, completed a self-reflection assignment. Thirty-three educators noted that real-time coaching while implementing new pedagogical strategies was highly valued. These educators would benefit from continued coaching throughout the school year to ensure that the knowledge gained throughout the SSLPL program will be implemented into classroom practice, and in turn can be impactful on student outcomes.

Teacher Implementation

All teachers were formally observed by using a grade-level HILL FSLP matrix at least two times during the SSLPL program. Certified teachers who participated in the coursework received a score out of 40 points on one of their formal observations. The scored HILL FSLP matrices indicated high levels of fidelity of implementation. In Randolph, students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade will continue to be instructed in HILL FSLPs during the school year. Thus, all students who participated in SSLPL will continue to receive structured literacy instruction throughout the school year and teacher implementation data will continue to be collected.

Components to Ensure Success

Transportation. The town of Randolph provided transportation, and therefore student attendance was relatively high. The site coordinator collected attendance daily. On average, students attended the program 76% of days.

Variety of Roles. The commitment of the Randolph staff was exceptional. Administrators, teachers, education assistants, coaches, administrative assistants, and site coordinator contributed immensely to the success of the SSLPL program. The average educator attended the program 95% of the days and the successful collaboration between coaches and educators was a positive aspect of the program. In addition, Randolph produced a team that consisted of elementary teachers, graduate assistants, and undergraduate assistants.

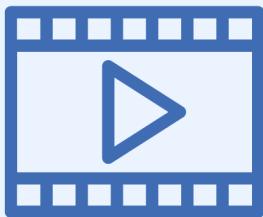
Next Steps

There are important factors that may have contributed to lack of student growth. In the future, similar initiatives should consider:

- *Recruitment:* Students that participate in the SSLPL program should be recruited based on need, not just parent interest. Recruitment of students should start earlier in the school year, so families have the opportunity to plan for summer school.
- *Data Collection:* Data should be collected at the beginning of the program and at the end of the program and reliability checks should be conducted during pre- and post-test data collection.
- *Parent Feedback:* Collecting parent feedback would be an important consideration. Did parents notice a change in their child's behavior around literacy? Were their children more likely to pick up a book and engage in reading due to confidence gained through the program?



In conclusion, there are a large number of students who are reading below grade level in Massachusetts and are at risk for future reading difficulties (e.g., NAEP, 2022). Effective structured literacy instruction that is (a) intentional, (b) differentiated, (c) rigorous, and (d) occurs over a period of time (Young & Hasbrouck, 2024) can improve student reading outcomes. Further, increasing teacher knowledge by providing professional development in addition to embedded coaching support are all ways in which we can improve both educator and student outcomes. **If schools establish goals around high leverage evidence-based practices, we will be able to give the greatest number of students the greatest opportunity to access robust instruction in our classrooms and improve reading proficiency for all.**



WATCH THE VIDEO:
bit.ly/RandolphSSLPL2024



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