EFFECTIVE FIRST GRADE LITERACY TEACHING TEAMS

ULEAD EDUCATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Four outlier teacher teams excelling in first grade literacy were interviewed to understand their practices contributing to grade-level success while implementing the Science of Reading.

Park View Elementary School
Nebo School District
Doreen Barney, teacher
Lynne Lowe, instructional coach
Natalie Mellen, teacher
Shanna Walker, principal

Springside Elementary School
Alpine School District
Kim Beuchert, teacher
Brooke Downs, teacher
Tami Galbraith, teacher
Gary Gibb, principal
Lisa Hatch, plc coach
Cassidy Jex, teacher
Kaylynn Martin, teacher
Lindsay Rowland, assistant principal

Westland Elementary School
Jordan School District
Olena Bradford, instructional coach
Laurie Goodsell, principal
Michelle Lovell, literacy consultant
Kristy Medina, teacher
Rebecca Schaefer, teacher
Michelle Searle, teacher
Celeste Teeples, teacher

Westridge Elementary School
Provo School District
Laurel Dean Karlsven, teacher
Megan Clark, instructional coach
Jennifer Frame, teacher
Kim Hawkins, principal
Jennifer Maffei, teacher

Discourse communities among diverse teacher teams, which draw on each other's expertise to enhance teaching and learning, are one effective teacher learning structure (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Leaders in the Brigham Young University Professional Development Coordinating Council (PDCC) conducted semi-structured group interviews with successful first-grade teacher teams that demonstrated student literacy growth and achievement after implementing Science of Reading practices. PDCC members aimed to identify common practices in these discourse communities that contributed to team success, with the goal of replicating them among other early literacy teams. Three core practices common among the teams include:

Consistent Use of Data to Inform Instruction

High Team Efficacy and Collaboration

Student Goal Setting and Monitoring

Additional supportive structures contributing to the success of teams included access to high-quality instructional materials, straightforward access to data, instructional coaching support, professional learning, and professional learning communities. The teachers also employed all five of Utah's High Leverage Teaching Practices in their work.

Each team operated within a supportive professional workplace where the team culture contributed to their successful outcomes and sense of self-efficacy. As one teacher expressed, **"What we do matters, and we can make it matter."** A limitation to replication is that culture is idiosyncratic and difficult to systematize.

Teachers can be supported with professional learning that models data analysis, instructional planning decisions in response to data, classroom lessons, and lesson debriefs. Both formal and informal collaboration time contribute to teacher success. For replication to be successful, significant time should be invested in developing collective teacher efficacy.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic (ULEAD) Education was created to find, research, and highlight proven practices in Utah schools for replication statewide. ULEAD partners with practitioners, researchers, and education organizations to develop and curate resources, foster collaboration, and drive systemic change for improved student outcomes. The ULEAD Clearinghouse is a growing repository of innovative, effective, and efficient practice resources and tools to support educators.

The ULEAD Steering Committee, composed of current Utah educators and stakeholders, meets quarterly to inform the focus priorities that ULEAD will research. ULEAD uses data to find positive outliers in each focus area and create reports, such as this one, illuminating the practices and policies that lead to positive outcomes. At the time of this report, these priorities include:

Student Attendance, Educator Retention and Job Satisfaction, Academic Achievement through Strategic Engagement through Technology, and Academic Success through Social Emotional Supports Grounded in Academic Classroom Practice, with an emphasis on middle grade mathematics and multilingual learner achievement.

This report addresses effective teaching strategies among outlier first grade teaching teams. ULEAD collaborates with Institutes of Higher Education and education practitioners to develop Innovative Practice Reports. This report was developed in partnership with the Brigham Young University Public School Partnership Professional Development Coordinating Council (PDCC). For more about the PDCC, please see Appendix A.

RESEARCH TEAM

This report is made possible by the collective expertise and contributions of the PDCC research team members.

Dawan Coombs
Brigham Young University

Carolyn Gough
Jordan School District

Barry Graff
Brigham Young University

Tod Johnson
Wasatch School District

Suzanne Kimball
Nebo School District

Brandon McMillan
Brigham Young University

Nate Mitchell
Provo School District

John Patten
Brigham Young University

Joel Perkins
Alpine School District

Garrick Peterson
Wasatch School District

Kevin Rich
Wasatch School District

Jarod Sites
Provo School District

Richard Sudweeks
Brigham Young University