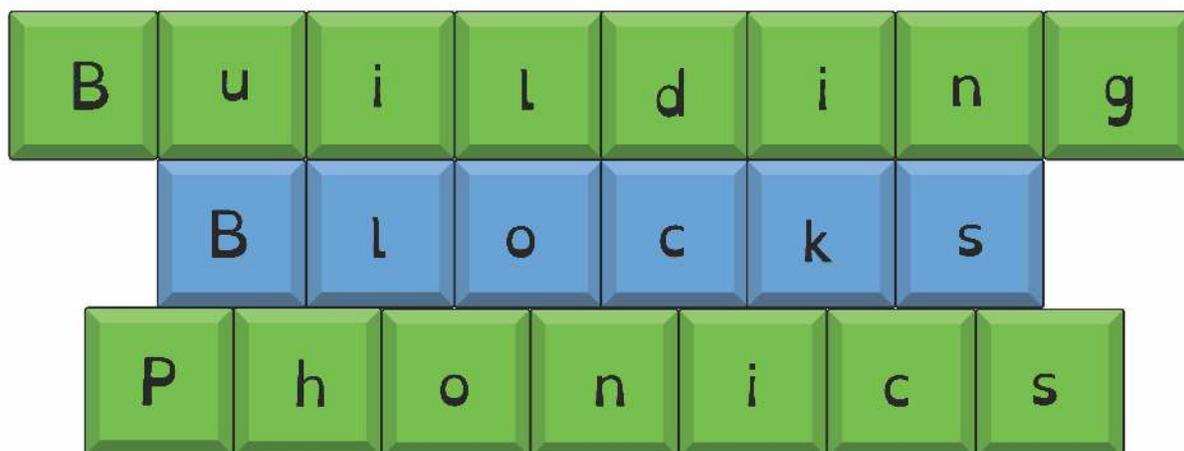


Research Proposal by



Prepared by: Building Blocks Phonics (OSW, LLC)

Prepared for: Your school district

2019

Title:

Developing Teachers' Ease with Systematic Phonics Instruction Leading to Students' Reading Success (protocol #001)

Projected start and end dates:

January 2020 - June 2020

How will this study contribute to educational advances in Your school district: Building Blocks Phonics and Charlotte-Mecklenburg will gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of teaching specific, sequential phonics instruction for struggling readers.

Procedures:

- Duration - January 2020/June 2020
- Up to 250 Kindergarten through 5th grade reading reading intervention students. Comprised of your school district (125 treatment students and 125 control students).
- Treatment student number must be equal to Control student number in each school.
- Teachers are to be randomly selected.
- Student data collected will be composed of: student name, ethnicity, any special identifiers (i.e. IEP, 504, ESOL, etc.), free and reduced status, WRAT 5 and DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (appropriate grade level) assessment results.
- Assessment tools: WRAT 5 Letter and Word Recognition Subtest Blue and Green Versions, DIBELS ORF (appropriate grade level) - given 3 times throughout the study (about every 10 weeks)
- First WRAT5 and DIBELS ORF assessments will be used as pre-intervention data to show equivalency between Treatment and Control groups to measure program impacts.
- Two subsequent assessments will be used to track progress for both Treatment and Control groups.
- We will alternate between Blue and Green forms of WRAT5 and DIBELS ORF probes 1 - 3 throughout all three assessments.
- Treatment and Control groups in each school will be assessed on the same day.
- We will train teachers with Building Blocks Phonics curriculum prior to beginning treatment start date.
- We will coach treatment teachers an additional two times throughout the study (about every 10 weeks).

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- Teachers who administer the treatment must be highly qualified, may not include long term subs or certified teaching assistant.
 - Only the teacher assigned as the teacher of record for the 2019-2020 school year can participate in the study.
 - Building Blocks Phonics will be taught as a supplemental Phonics Curriculum and will be implemented during the allotted reading intervention instruction time.
 - Instruction will be delivered during reading intervention lessons lasting for 15-20 minutes while practicing using the Building Blocks Phonics consumable student book.
 - The student consumable books will be used to collect data on application, mastery, and automaticity.
 - Parent Resources will be sent home to all participating student families at the beginning of treatment.
 - Consent Forms will be made available to participating treatment and control students as soon as approval from District and Principals are given in order to obtain parent signatures. (Sample Control Consent Form Appendix C and Sample Treatment Consent Form D are attached.)

Data collection schedule and type of data collected: (tentative schedule)

Pre-intervention/Baseline equivalency assessment: 12/10/19 - 12/12/19 OR 01/07/20 - 01/09/20

Study implementation assessment 1: 03/10/20 - 03/12/20

Post-reading intervention assessment 3: 06/02/20 - 06/04/20

Assessment: WRAT5 Letter and Word Recognition Subtest and DIBELS ORF (appropriate grade level)

Given by certified SC teacher

How and to whom data will be reported:

Raw data will be analyzed by Dr. Patrick Gerard, director and site manager of Clemson University's Statistics and Mathematics Consulting Center.

Data will be reported to participating teachers, school administrators, and the district leaders following each assessment interval. The data will be input into spreadsheet, analyzed, and reported via email and a hard copy to the appropriate district representatives.

Impact on instructional time at the schools:

Instructional time should not be disrupted as Building Blocks Phonics will be implemented as a part of the curriculum structure within a reading intervention classroom. Teachers will complete an online pre-training that takes approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. They will also attend one half-day training. During the study, Building Blocks Phonics will be in each school for two coaching times. Building Blocks Phonics representatives will coordinate with each treatment teacher in order to schedule coaching times.

Selection method for participants/schools:

Upon approval from Your school district, schools will be approached to participate in the research study. Once principals agree, we will ask principals to choose teachers randomly (if more than one reading intervention teacher on staff) to participate in the research study and to choose students randomly. For every treatment student participating, there must be a control student to mirror.

What participants will be asked to do:

Teachers:

1. Attend both trainings (online and in person) for Building Blocks Phonics curriculum prior to beginning treatment start date.
2. Consent Forms will be made available to participating treatment and control students prior to initial base-line data collection in order to obtain parent signatures.
3. Send home parent resources prior to the start of treatment.
4. Collaborate with Building Blocks Phonics during the two coaching days.
5. Teach Building Blocks Phonics with fidelity for the second semester of the 2019/2020 school year.
6. Instruction will be delivered during reading intervention lessons lasting for 15-20 minutes while practicing using the Building Blocks Phonics consumable student book.
7. Use student consumable books daily. Books will be used to collect data on application, mastery, and automaticity.

Students:

1. Return signed consent form.
2. Participate in daily lessons.
3. Participate in all three WRAT5 and DIBELS ORF assessments.

Potential risks and benefits to the participants:

The participating teachers will benefit from new knowledge of phonics rules that have not been previously taught to pre-service teachers. This will give the teachers a technical language that should be used throughout the day to validate students' instruction and knowledge. It can be used to help decode environmental print, throughout all subjects. Students will benefit positively from systemic phonics instruction that is taught in a sequential order and at a pace that accelerates their phonetic knowledge, awareness and fluency, thus allowing for comprehension skills to be taught at a greater depth and at a faster rate. This will lead to more confident and well-rounded readers. Previous growth trends from Spring 2018 Pilots, showed an approximate half of year's growth in letter recognition and word decoding after 12 weeks of instruction.

A potential risk is the lack of fidelity or consistency resulting in limited student growth. We have two coaching days throughout the implementation to ensure teachers are given ample opportunity to ask questions and observe modeled lessons while supplying them with ample positive support and feedback.

Another potential risk is that each student may miss up to five minutes of instruction during each WRAT5 assessment and DIBLES ORF. Teachers and Building Blocks Phonics representatives will collaborate to minimize core instruction disruption.

Hypotheses of the study:

Building Blocks Phonics is a complete, explicit, systematic phonics supplemental curriculum that teaches all 44 sounds of English. The scope and sequence builds as students progress through the curriculum. Each module is dependent upon the prior module(s) taught. Prior modules support new phonetic concepts.

As former teachers, we have used effective literacy curricula but the phonics component didn't appear to meet all students' needs. Upon preliminary research, we discovered that most phonics components of literacy curricula that we were using were used an analytic approach. As we grew to understand analytic phonics, we realized that many students needed simplified, concrete phonics knowledge in order to begin reading.

After researching several systematic phonics curricula, we decided to use our classroom experience and knowledge of teaching young children how to read and create Building Blocks Phonics. The purpose of our research is to prove that systematic phonics instruction produces significantly higher relative growth compared to phonics instruction that is considered "business as usual" when implemented with reading intervention students.

Summary of research design including statistical analysis procedures:

We are proposing to complete a quasi-experimental design study following standards and best practices as laid out by What Works Clearinghouse (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>) and Evidence for ESSA (<https://www.evidenceforessa.org>).

Standard statistical analysis procedures will be completed by Dr. Patrick Gerard, director and site manager of Clemson University's Statistics and Mathematics Consulting Center.

Introduction:

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As former teachers, we have used effective literacy curricula, but the phonics component didn't appear to meet all students' needs. Upon preliminary research, we discovered that most phonics components of literacy curricula that we were using used an analytic approach.

As we grew to understand analytic phonics, we realized that many students needed a more simplified, concrete phonics knowledge in order to begin reading.

After researching several systematic phonics curricula, we decided to use our classroom experience and knowledge of teaching young children how to read to create Building Blocks Phonics. The purpose of our research is to prove that systematic phonics instruction produces significantly higher relative growth compared to phonics instruction that is considered "business as usual" when implemented with reading intervention students.

Summary of Literature Review:

According to Herbest and Apel (2017, p. 303), a solid phonological awareness is a predictor of reading ability. It is necessary for children to be able to manipulate all the sounds of their language in order to read and write. Students must be able to master the alphabet code in order to reach a high level of reading success, in addition, knowing how to use these skills must be explicitly taught. For improving student's ability to read known and unknown, regularly and irregular spelled words, NRP found in 2000 that systematic phonics instruction was preferred. It was also determined that, explicit, systematic phonics instruction was found to improve reading for students with reading disabilities as well as students from low socioeconomic homes.

The above statements support the National Reading Panel (Phonics Instruction, 2000) findings and determinations that explicit, systematic phonics instruction best served elementary students who are having difficulty learning to read. Systematic phonics instruction produced students with better decoding and encoding skills.

International Literacy Association (2018) states "phonics instruction helps students learn the written correspondences between letters and patterns of letters, and sounds. It should be noted that phonics is one element of a comprehensive literacy program that much also include comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, writing, and thinking." (Bear, et al., 2018)

Conclusion:

The above summaries support Building Blocks Phonics ideals that explicit, systematic phonics instruction is necessary and most effective. Building Blocks Phonics is a supplemental systematic phonics curriculum that teaches students the 44 sounds in the English language. Rules and patterns are taught in a sequential order that enables students to be able to manipulate all the sounds of their language. Which has been proven to improve students' ability to read. The curriculum is meant to complement the resources and framework already set in place by your school district. Building Blocks Phonics is an important element of a comprehensive literacy program. It provides a strong foundation for decoding skills, ample opportunities for application and practice, while giving students concrete explanations for sounds. We believe that this method of teaching phonics will accelerate student learning, help to close achievement gaps, and provide teachers with a technical language that can be integrated throughout their day thus, helping students to become successful and confident readers.

References:

Herbest, V. & Apel, K. (2017, January 18). Effective Word Reading Instruction: What Does the Evidence Tell Us? *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 39, Issue 1. pp.303-311. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1525740116685183>

International Literacy Association. (2018). Explaining phonics instruction: An educator's guide [Literacy leadership brief]. Newark, DE: Author.

National Reading Panel (2000). Phonics Instruction. Retrieved from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/phonics-instruction>

Source of research funds:

Building Blocks Phonics is self-funded and will providing all materials and training/coaching at no charge to your school district.

Materials participants receive/use:

Teachers will be provided with the following:

- Building Blocks Phonics Teacher Manual
- Online pre-training introductory class
- One half-day training
- Two coaching sessions throughout study

Students will be provided the following:

- Building Blocks Phonics Student Book
- Parent Resource
- Online sound practice