The Early Writing Project: Building on Promising Research

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Background
Many students respond positively to standard intervention protocols; however, a small proportion does not, requiring more intensive, individualized instruction. Data-Based Instruction (DBI) has a strong evidence base, but is not widely implemented (Stecker, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2005).

What is Data-Based Instruction (DBI)?

1. Establish present level of writing performance
2. Set ambitious long-term goal
3. Monitor progress toward the goal
4. Implement high-quality instruction with fidelity
5. Use decision rules to evaluate instructional effectiveness and student progress
6. Generate hypothesis about student progress to individualize instruction
7. Make an instructional change based on hypothesis chosen in step 6
8. Repeat steps 4-7 as necessary

The Early Writing Project Program Components
Tools (assessment tools, intervention plans and materials)
Learning (face-to-face workshops where teachers learn to use DBI)
Collaborative support (ongoing coaching to support teachers’ use of DBI)

Pilot Study Sample and Methods
Setting: One large and one mid-sized school district in two different states in the Midwest
N = 20 elementary school teachers and 57 students
RCT with mixed-methods design

Current Randomized Control Trial/Next Step

Research Questions
What are the effects of DBI-TLC on (a) teachers’ knowledge, skills, and efficacy in writing, and (b) students’ early writing outcomes?

Are the effects of DBI-TLC on students’ early writing outcomes moderated by grade level, special education status (i.e., students with/without IEPs), or EL status?

Are the effects of DBI-TLC on students’ early writing outcomes mediated by teachers’ DBI knowledge and skills, efficacy in writing, or fidelity of implementation?

To what extent do teachers who participate in DBI-TLC for one year sustain their implementation of DBI with fidelity over time?

Methods

- Study Design
  Randomized control trial
  3 years of data-collection with sustainability measured
  Mixed-methods analysis

- Participants
  Projected N=140 teachers, N=280-420 students across two states

- Measures
  Pre-Post teacher knowledge & skills, writing orientation, teacher efficacy
  Pre-Post student proximal CBM measures and distal achievement measures
  Fidelity of implementation
  Sustained use of DBI

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Preliminary Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PILOT Study Teacher Outcomes by Condition</th>
<th>DBI-TLC (n = 11)</th>
<th>Control (n = 9)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge &amp; Skills Pretest</td>
<td>25.35</td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>32.32</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Efficacy Pretest</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Efficacy Pretest</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings from the pilot study, indicated that teachers who received DBI-TLC outperformed teachers who did not receive DBI-TLC in their knowledge and skills of data-based instruction.

Teachers who received DBI-TLC outperformed teachers who did not receive DBI-TLC in their knowledge and skills of data-based instruction. On Average, students in the DBI-TLC group outperformed their peers in the control group on Curriculum-Based Measures at post-test. Differences between groups were non-significant.