



Project READERS: An Evaluation of Rural Professional Development with Distance Coaching in Response to Intervention and Early Reading Supports

Project Contributors



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Part I: Research Overview

Introduction/Rationale



- Reading is a critical prerequisite for all learning in school settings and for promoting academic success
- Unfortunately, access to quality and ongoing reading instructional supports can often be a challenge for rural teachers
- Many rural schools have begun to adopt a Response-to-Intervention (RTI) approach for the early prevention of reading difficulties that includes:
 - Using data to identify students at risk of reading difficulties
 - Planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction and interventions to promote student reading
- Additional research is needed to assess the utility of efficient and effective approaches, including the use of technology, for supporting rural teachers in this process

Project READERS



- Response to Effective Assessment Driven
Early Readng Supports

Purpose of Project



- To evaluate the impact of rural teacher professional development with web-based coaching in the use of student data and the implementation of interventions to prevent and remediate reading difficulties

Research Design & Timeline



- Three-cohort, **randomized experimental design**
- Currently in final year of implementation
- Data analysis will be completed in 2013-2014



Participants

- K-3 rural classroom teachers and reading interventionists from over 80 schools in the Midwestern or Northeastern U.S.



Procedure

- Schools randomly assigned to *PD with coaching* or *business-as-usual*
- Teachers and interventionists in PD schools participate in onsite institute-based trainings and ongoing web-facilitated coaching from one of six instructional coaches
- Professional development focuses on:
 - using data to identify students with reading difficulties and to plan and evaluate interventions
 - Implementing effective instructional practices and specific reading interventions
- Distance coaching occurs outside of class time (teachers) or during intervention delivery via a “bug-in-the-ear” approach (interventionists)
- The impact of PD with coaching on teacher and student outcomes is assessed via multiple measures

Data Collection/Outcome Measures

- Teacher Outcomes
 - Knowledge (direct assessment)
 - Perceptions (belief & self-efficacy ratings)
 - Practices (teacher logs for data-based decisions, intervention videotaping)
- Student Outcomes
 - DIBELS Next
 - Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement – Reading
- Fidelity of Implementation is assessed via coach and interventionist observations and fidelity checklists



Part II: Professional Development Implementation

Why coaching in rural settings?



- Over 10 million students across the country attend school in rural settings
- Teachers in rural settings face unique challenges in their ability to remain up-to-date with evidence-based strategies and in transferring that knowledge into practice
- Professional development with ongoing support (coaching) has been shown to improve skill development and transfer of practices from training into the classroom setting (Joyce & Showers, 2002)
- However, rural settings face unique challenges
 - geographic and educational isolation often leads to limited availability of professional development, human, and material resources
 - lack of available staff to support professional development efforts (e.g., coaches, consultants, substitute teachers for teacher release time)
- Technology may be an important way to provide support for rural teachers

Why focus on early reading supports and the use of data for decision making?



- Children come to school with varying early literacy experiences
- Without intervention, 90% of struggling first graders will still be struggling at the end of elementary school
- Without intervention, 74% of students who are poor readers in 3rd grade will be poor readers in 9th grade
- Struggling readers have a higher risk of academic failure and school dropout
- The power of early intervention and data-driven instructional decision making to improve academic and behavioral outcomes for students is well-documented

Training for Teachers & Interventionists



- Teacher trainings provide content around the rationale and “how to” of data-based decision making for students
 - Include didactic training and active participation through the use of scenarios and real students data
- Intervention trainings provide support in effective delivery of reading interventions
 - Includes training on effective teaching practices as well as training on specific intervention protocols
 - Includes modeling and opportunity for practice with feedback

Teacher Institute

- Day 1
 - Rationale for Project READERS & Data-based Decision Making
 - Administration & Scoring procedures for DIBELS Next
- Day 2
 - What & Why of RTI
 - Critical content and key, research validated instructional delivery techniques for effective reading instruction
 - Overview of Problem Solving and Intervention Planning Process
- Day 3
 - Using screening data to identify students in need of intervention supports
 - Determining level for progress monitoring and setting ambitious goals for students
 - Analyzing reading data to identify skill areas to target for intervention

Teacher Institute (cont.)

- Day 4
 - Key elements of effective intervention
 - Flexible grouping practices
 - Monitoring fidelity of intervention delivery
 - Documenting intervention
 - Preview of interventions used within Project READERS toolkit
- Day 5
 - Understanding pieces of data needed for decision making
 - Analyzing intervention data
 - Potential decisions that can be made based on analysis of data
 - Alterable components for modifying or intensifying intervention



Interventionist Training

- Invited and strongly encouraged to attend the Teacher Institute Sessions
- Intervention Institute (4 days of training)
 - Content
 - Managing small group instruction/behavior
 - Explicit instructional techniques
 - Delivery of each intervention used in Project READERS toolkit
 - Intervention documentation (including assessing fidelity)
 - Structure
 - Didactic instruction related to rationale for explicit instructional techniques
 - Modeling of specific formats/aspects of lessons from each intervention
 - Practice with feedback

Training and Support for Coaches

- Content training
- Protocol training
- Protocol practice
- Coach supervision – video feedback
- Coach group meetings
- Coach self reflection and peer feedback

Coaching works to...

- Ensure implementation and fidelity
 - Practice/improve skills needed to implement practices with fidelity
- Develop local capacity
 - Teachers & interventionists develop a conceptual understanding of the practices and the skills necessary to implement the practices
- What this means for coaching within a RTI framework
 - Protocol driven to model a systematic process
 - Immediate feedback paired with reflective feedback
 - Larger emphasis on modeling and guided practice in early sessions, shifting to teacher practice with feedback/support in later sessions

Project READERS Coaching

DBDM visits

- Conducted with general education teachers
- Outside of classroom instruction
- Protocol driven
- Walk teachers through process of using data to inform instruction and intervention

Intervention Implementation (“bug-in-ear” and debriefing)

- Observe intervention implementation live
- Provide feedback/modeling during instruction
- Debrief following the session

DBDM Coaching Sessions



Focus on application of content covered in the most recent Teacher Institute Session

Structure of sessions:

1. Updates on progress/tasks from previous coaching session
2. Review of content from the Institute relevant to next step in the process
3. Review of relevant data (e.g., screening, progress monitoring)
4. Guided practice
 - a. Coach walks through next step with the teacher using 1 student from the class
 - b. Teacher walks through next step with a second student
5. Preview next coaching visit
6. Set teacher & coach next steps

Intervention Implementation Coaching Protocol Steps



When instruction is interrupted:



- Provide positive feedback – interventionist and students
- Provide brief assignment for students
- Quickly and softly describe the concern
- Provide rationale for suggested change
- Praise students for working & quickly ask about task
- Model suggested change for the interventionist
- Have interventionist continue by repeating the activity where you stopped him/her
- Provide positive feedback for interventionist


Coach: _____
Date: _____

Teacher: _____
School: _____



DBDM Coaching Protocol Session 1

-  Start recording with WebEx (if not set up to record automatically)
-  Record Start Time: _____
- Greeting and Agenda-approximately 2 minutes*
 - Open the meeting with a greeting, and thank the teacher for his/her willingness to participate
 - Set the agenda. **Refer to Handout 1: Agenda DBDM 1**
 - Statement of coaching session objective for today
 - Review content, data, practice together
 - Teacher next steps
 - Next meeting
- Statement of Coaching Session Objective-approximately 1 minute*
 - Analyze universal screening data and validation data to identify students for whom additional assessment data are necessary and prepare for Survey Level Assessment
- Updates from last Teacher Institute – *approximately 1 minute*
 - Check to determine if teacher next steps were completed
 - Conducted validation assessment for all students who did not meet benchmarks according to Project READERS guidelines
- Content Review-approximately 5 minutes*
 - Using Handout 2: Review slides**, review content from the Teacher Institute
 - Conducting survey level assessment to determine progress monitoring level

<p>Coaching Guidelines</p> 	<p>Survey Level Assessment: Conduct a Survey Level Assessment for all students not meeting benchmarks in grades 1, 2, and 3.</p> <p>Refer to Handout 5: SLA Flowchart to determine progress-monitoring level. Monitor progress at instructional level weekly and grade level monthly.</p>
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Additional Coaching Supports



Coaching Calls

- Check in with teachers and interventionists
- Answer questions between coaching sessions
- Give teachers reminders about completing graphs and logging decision making

Teacher Implementation visits

- Observe teacher instruction during reading block
- Provide feedback

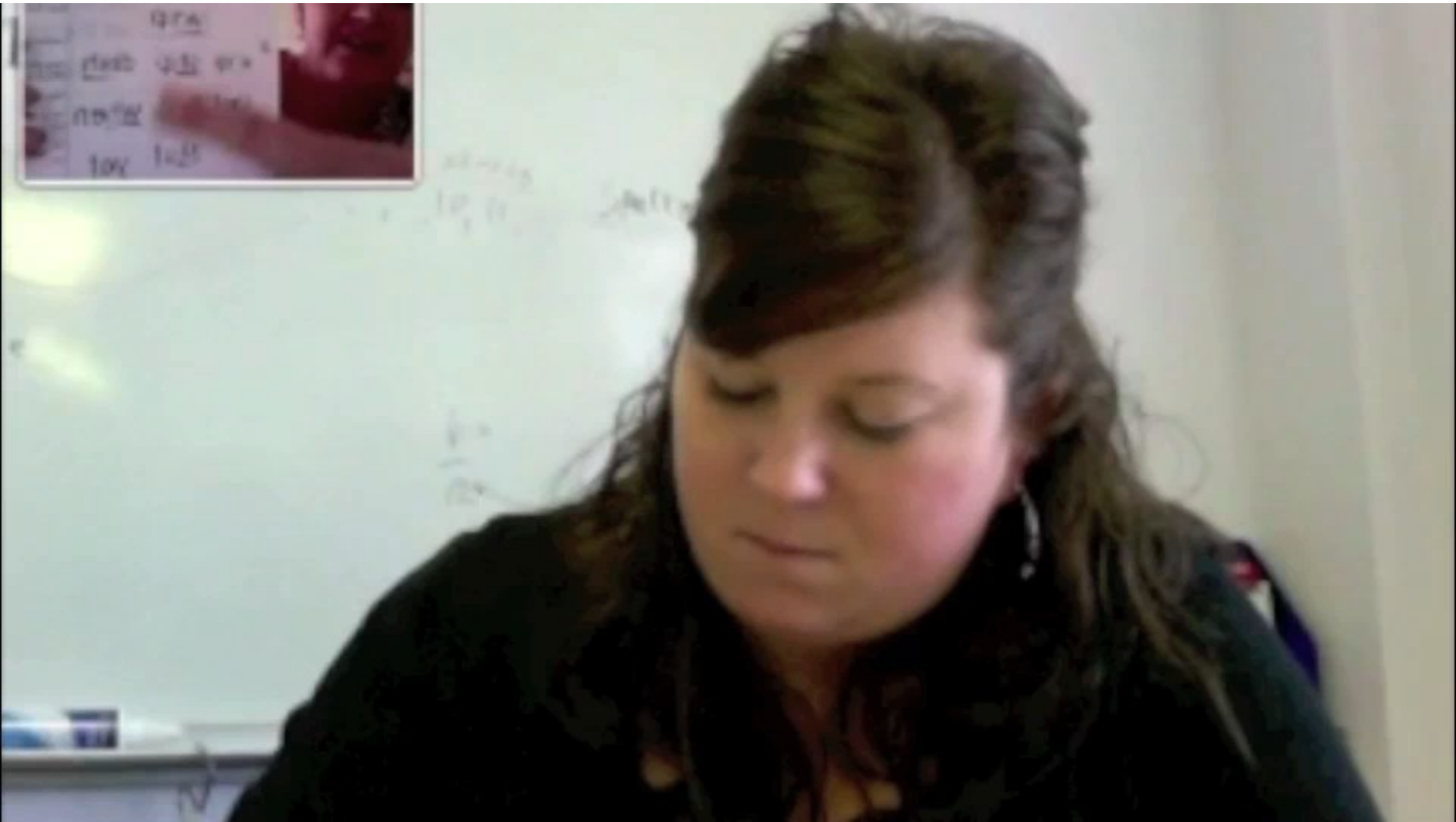
Ongoing contact

- Review teachers' data, logs, plans, videos
- Answer emails & phone calls

Intervention Coaching Video



Intervention Debriefing Video



What Participants Are Saying



Comments from Teachers

“Being able to converse one on one and ask questions and get immediate feedback was priceless!”

“I really liked getting ideas on what to do with different groups of kids, help on how to group kids, what materials to use for small groups, and having [my reading coach] as a sounding board for ideas!”

Comments from Interventionists

"My coach listens to my concerns and helps me become a better interventionist." "When I have questions [my reading coach] is always willing to answer them right away or show me how to do better with the students." "Having the coach give me feedback on what I was doing right and what I needed to change." "The debriefing session allowed me to hear what I am doing well and what I need to improve." "The immediate feedback gave me the opportunity to see my coach model certain skills."

Project Significance & Next Steps

- First study to examine the impact of rural teacher PD with distance coaching on teacher knowledge, perceptions, and practices, and student outcomes in the area of reading
- Findings will have important implications for PD and teacher supports related to the application of RTI-Reading in rural schools
- An extension of this research has been proposed to examine implementation barriers and enablers, to better identify optimal aspects of PD

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