

Educator Competencies: Beyond Student Impact

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&

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Stonington Public Schools

- Approximately 2200
- Two Prek-5 Elementary Schools
- One 6-8 Middle School
- One 9-12 High school
- Three Title I Schools

Stonington Public Schools

Analysis of Reading Instructional Methods in 2013:

- No consistent literacy intervention program for students with SLD and Dyslexia
- Lack of specific training in the area of structured literacy for our special education and remedial reading teachers
- Teachers lacked knowledge of best practices and strategies to assist struggling readers; lacked diagnostic experience

Consequences

- Struggling readers not making progress
- Parents asking for out-placements
- Teachers not feeling confident about their abilities to deliver effective literacy instruction, and support students!

Solution

Implement a Structured Literacy Program:

Systematic/Cumulative

Explicit

Diagnostic

What did this mean?

- Select a structured program(s) that would meet our current needs
- Provide teachers training, ***while they were teaching***
- Dedicate appropriate funds to support training
- Get support from key stakeholders

How did this impact the district?

Cost

Approximate cost **per year** to train a cohort of 4 teachers: \$25,000

Includes:

- Cost for practicum trainer
- Cost for online graduate courses
- Added teaching costs to compensate teachers for added time for additional planning, and after school coaching sessions
- Additional costs for subs to cover teachers during PD days
- **All** annual professional development money for Special Services was allocated to this initiative

Time

- Teachers given extra release time to complete online courses, ***this is time spent out of the classroom***
- Teachers required to complete additional lesson plans for their structured literacy lessons
- Teachers required to stay after school every other month for 2-3 hours for sessions with practicum instructor
- Teachers daily schedule impacted, working around the practicum requirements, some had to travel to other schools for practicum student

Support/Investment from Stakeholders

Teachers

Administrators

Board of Education

Families/Students

Results

- Students making progress
- Renewed trust from parents
- Increased competency and confidence amongst our teaching staff
- Teachers requesting the training in structured literacy

Comments from Parents (2016)

“We have noticed a tremendous difference since our daughter began using the (structured literacy) program. Her fluency has improved, she is willing to read independently and she is becoming a more confident reader” -*4th Grade Parent*

“This reading instruction has given my son the ability to be proud of his work. It gives him more confidence in himself. My son likes to read more now than he did before. He has come so far with this program and it shows in his grades. I couldn't be any prouder of my son as I am now. Thank you very much” - *Parent of two children, elementary and middle school*

“Before this year, my daughter would not look at book...she would say, “Mommy, I can't read!”, Somewhere along the way, everything has changed, she's not only reading the books, she's not putting them down until they are done. I am so grateful my daughter had this support, because now she can read and loves it.” - *3rd Grade Parent*

Heather Harris

Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

- BS, Elementary Education & Special Education
- Honors Project: Cross Cultural Emotional Responses to Children's Trade Books

University of La Verne, La Verne, CA

- MEd, emphasis in Child Life
- Graduate Thesis: Parental Perceptions of Child Life Programs: How Do Child Life Services Impact Hospitalization?

Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg MA

- CAGS, Wilson Reading & Special Education
- Graduate Thesis: The Wilson Reading System in Stonington Public Schools

Structured Literacy Training

- Despite training and multiple degrees, I needed something more to provide literacy instruction
- Completely different than undergraduate classes or previous workshops
- Multiple workshops and online classes- (16.5 hours introductory class, 20+ hours each online class, 12+ hours each other workshop)
- Practicum and observations, online via Skype and in person (5 observations, 1 hour each, also submitting lesson plans and test results)
- Completing all requirements while teaching was difficult and very time consuming

Overview of Research in Stonington Public Schools

- All participants were students in the district- started with 61, ended with 54
- Students were in grades 2 through 9
- Students participating were identified with the following disabilities:
 - Dyslexia
 - Specific Learning Disabilities
 - Emotional Disturbance
 - Autism
 - General Education students
- All teachers were trained and certified in the structured literacy program
- 14 teachers participated
- The assessment used was part of the structured literacy program

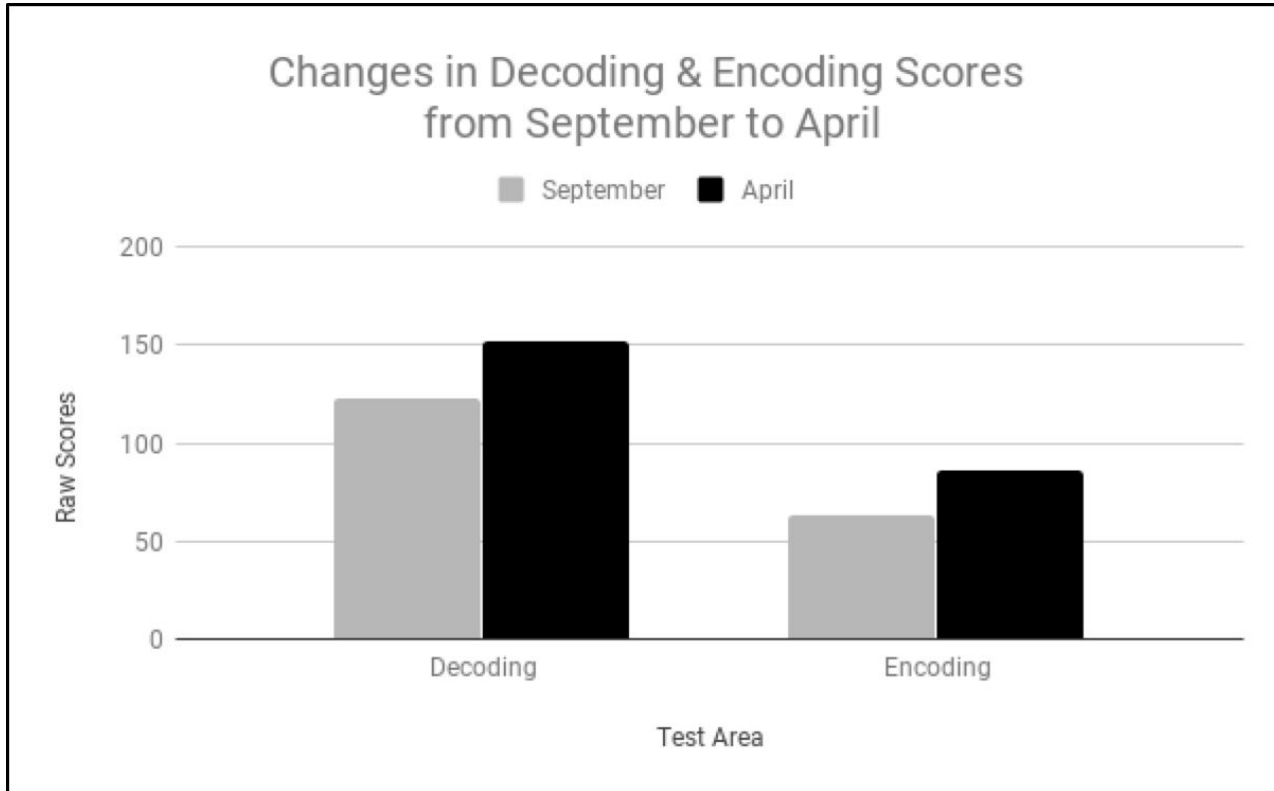
Overview of Research Continued

- All students were given assessment at the beginning of the year (prior to October 1) and end of the year (prior to April 24)
- Raw scores for both decoding and encoding were compared from beginning of year to end of year
- Teachers were asked to include time spent using the program and any complications in their data
 - Program recommends a particular number of minutes per day/week of instruction
 - Amount of time is limited by what is specified in the IEP, school schedules, other needs of the students

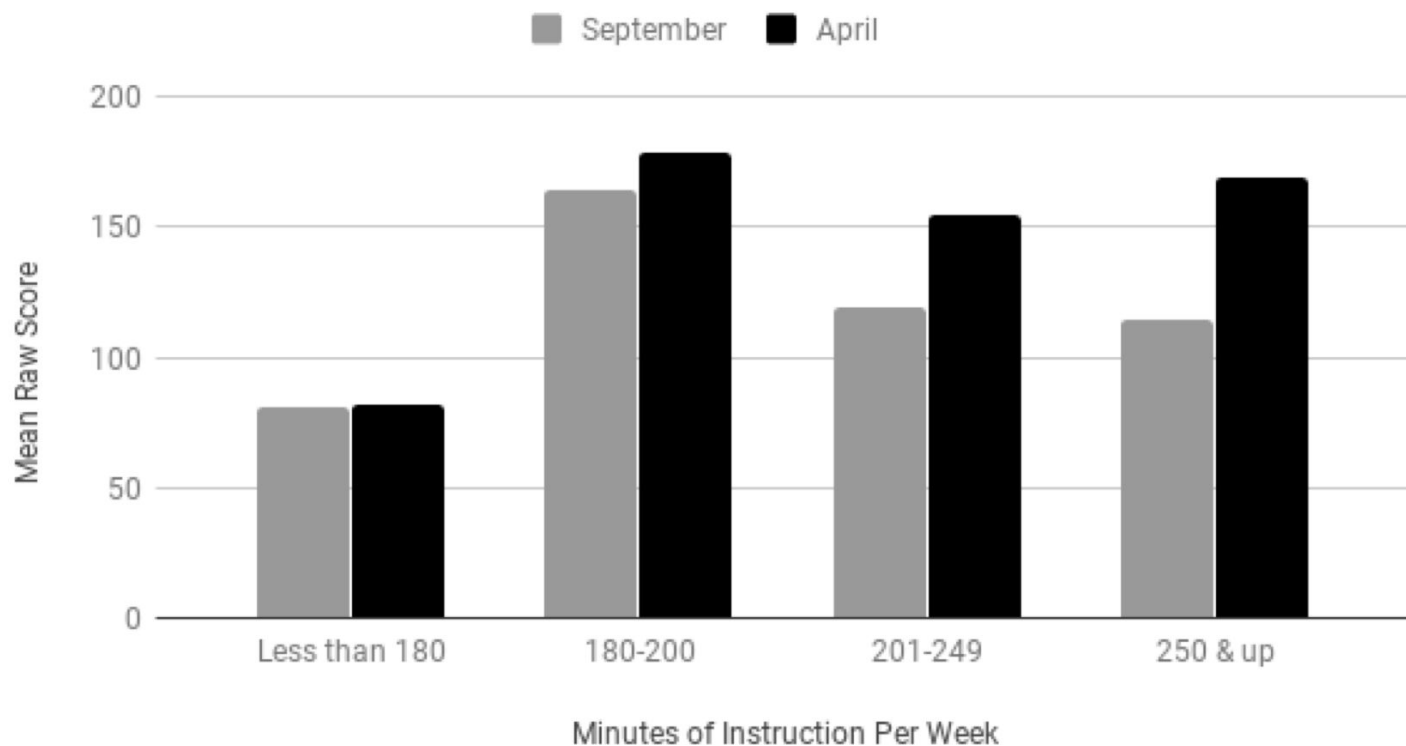
Assessment

- The assessment was part of the structured literacy program being used
- Students read phonetically regular words, sight words and nonsense words
- Students spell phonetically regular words, sight words, and sentences
- Subtests are scored individually, and overall scores are presented for both decoding and encoding
- Overall decoding and encoding scores were used for this research

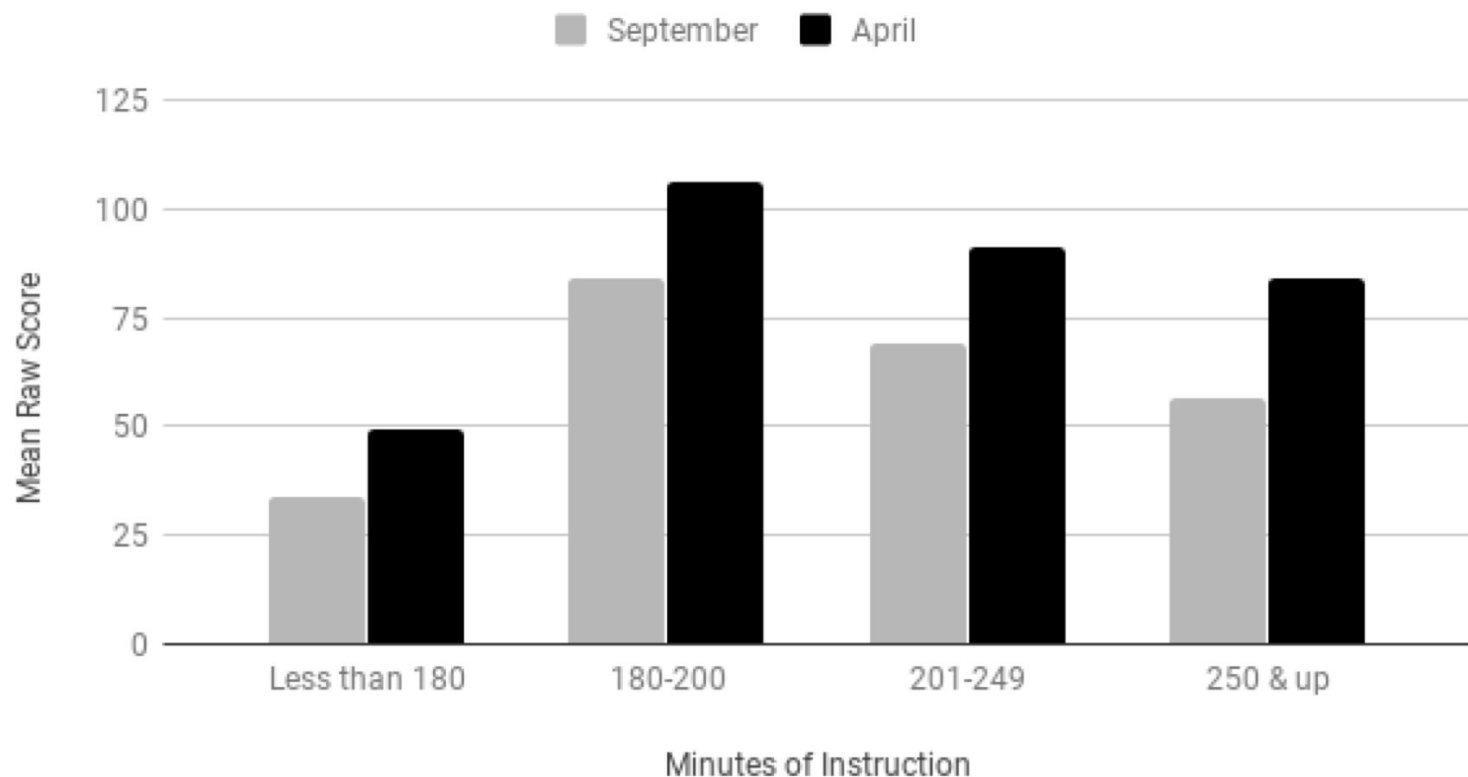
Results



Changes in Decoding Scores By on Minutes of Instruction



Changes in Encoding Scores By on Minutes of Instruction



Results & Discussion

- Consistent, daily delivery of structured literacy program showed great improvement in decoding and encoding scores
- The more instructional time the greater the score improvement, especially in decoding
- Students showed drastic improvement in spelling as they learned the rules, especially in the younger grades
- Special education teachers and reading specialists dedicate a tremendous amount of time to teaching with the program
- Teachers need to be able to dedicate the time needed to implement the program with fidelity

Results & Discussion Continued

- Middle and high school students reported feeling more confident in reading and spelling abilities
- Teachers feel confident teaching struggling readers when using a structured literacy program
- Teachers can share information with general education teachers to help reach all students

Personal Impact

- In the training I learned so many things I did not know- despite 10 years of teaching and 2 degrees
- I feel much more confident in my ability to teach reading to struggling learners
- Completely changed the way I look at reading instruction and language in general

Educator Competencies- Subcommittee Recommendations

- Term “Structured Literacy” used in all of the Public Acts; we utilized the IDA’s Knowledge and Practice Standards, which were designed to guide teacher preparation and educator certification
- Additionally, we referenced the objectives in the Foundation of Reading Test (FORT)
- Crosswalk has been provided to compare FORT and KPS, along with the specific certification areas, to recommend the minimum for a program of study
- Expanded the certification areas to 3 categories
- Recommendations take into consideration many of these standards may already being covered in teacher prep programs

Summary of Recommendations

- Greatest challenge was in the area of General Education and the recommended “12 clock hours”
- Recommending increasing the minimum requirement for #305 and #113
- Concern about impact of Rti requirements, for general educators working with K-6 population of students
- Crosswalk demonstrates the limits of the “12 clock hours” for general educators, specifically in Standards 3 (Assessment) and Standard 4 (Structured Literacy Instruction)

Modification of standards-

- 2.2- Know the fundamental provisions of federal and state laws that pertain to learning disabilities, including dyslexia and other reading and language disability subtypes. ****including basic processes and procedures for referral to special education***
- 2.3- *Identify the distinguishing characteristics of dyslexia* (see definition)*

Future Items:

Consideration preparation of related service professionals, and knowledge they require in best practices to identify and remediate issues related to dyslexia