REF770 Program Evaluation:

Evaluation Proposal

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Evaluation Proposal

Background

The city of Urbana, Illinois, founded in 1833, is the county seat of Champaign County (City of Urbana, 2015). Today, the 42,000 residents of Urbana pride themselves on being "smart, innovative, and globally connected" with access to "nationally recognized public schools" that are "progressive and high-achieving" thanks in part to their connection with the University of Illinois – Illinois' flagship university (City of Urbana, 2015, "Welcome," para. 1). Local school children are served by the Urbana School District (USD 116) which is made up of one early childhood school, six neighborhood elementary schools, one middle school and one high school (USD, 2019). Because the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) ranks as one of the top universities for international students and scholars according to the annual *Open Doors* report (second in the nation in 2017-2018 with over 13,000 in attendance), USD 116 has a strong commitment to ensuring that its diverse/multi-cultural student population receives innovative learning solutions (UIUC, 2018). The USD 116 mission is to "ensure that all learners acquire knowledge, develop skills, and build character to achieve personal greatness and help create a better global society, by providing innovative comprehensive programs, respecting individual learning styles and cultural differences, and fostering caring and nurturing relationships, while engaging each student, every family, and the entire community" (USD, 2019, "About," para. 1). Of the USD 116 student population (4,566), nearly 10% are English Language Learners, meaning those who are still developing their proficiency with English. All told the student population speaks over 40 different languages (USD, 2019).

When considering the diversity of the student population, the innovative ecosystem of the community with its attachment to the University of Illinois, and the district's drive toward

educational excellence, it is not surprising that such a district would be interested in the adoption of a new literacy program that represents a paradigm shift for teachers who are used to teaching reading through a whole language or analytics approach. Across America today, students are being taught to read by analyzing a word using the initial sound to kick-start their reading and by using context clues or word families which encourage the child to guess what the word is (Getting Reading Right, 2019). In early childhood classrooms or ELL-related studies, children are taught the letters of the alphabet in order by their name and sound or sounds they make. With synthetic phonics, there is no guessing as children are taught that every phoneme (sound) is important and how to blend those together when reading (Getting Reading Right, 2019). A bit surprising to teachers and parents who are use to a more traditional method, an alternative learning program called Jolly Phonics teaches sounds in a way that is multi-sensory and in the order of the 42 letter sounds (a mix of alphabet sounds and digraphs) in groups of six letters (not in alphabetic order) and four to five sounds a week (Jolly Learning, 2018).

Because children in the United States are failing to read in significant numbers (38%) and failure is compounded for ELL students, schools have the responsibility to campaign for better teaching of English language reading (Getting Reading Right, 2019). And, since success in learning to read is crucial to future academic success, it is not surprising that districts like USD 116 are seeking alternative reading programs. The Jolly Phonics program is used in over 100 countries worldwide. In 2007 the United Kingdom's government required all schools to teach reading in the primary grades using a synthetic (non-specified) phonics program (Ransom Publishing, 2019). It is for these reasons this evaluation will examine the effectiveness of a synthetic phonics reading program (i.e. Jolly Phonics) in a college community school district in

Central Illinois over the course of four years by focusing on the success of the program as determined by stakeholder feedback and ability to meet program goals/outcomes.

Evaluation

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this evaluation is to evaluate multi-sensory systemic teaching paired with synthetic phonics using the Jolly Phonics program in order to predict whether the program would meet the needs of the primary learners in USD 116 and if it would reap long-term benefits for the learners in reading development and literacy acquisition. The results of the evaluation will be used to help principals, literacy coaches, and district administrators decide if the program should be adopted long-term and throughout all elementary and early elementary classrooms. Should the program evaluation team be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of multi-sensory systemic teaching paired with synthetic phonics in improving student reading scores, the district will have evidence for justifying targeted Title I grants be used to fund the Jolly Phonics Program for districtwide dissemination.

The United States' federal government distributes Title 1 funds annually with the goal of improving learning at schools that serve children from low economic conditions (Panos, Reed, & Thompson, 2018). As shown in Figure 1, the Title I appropriations for 2020 show that the majority of the funding supports basic programs operated by local education agencies (LEAs) whereas the rest of the funding supports state assessment grants, the education of migratory or homeless children, and children who are at risk and in state-run institutions (Panos et al., 2018).

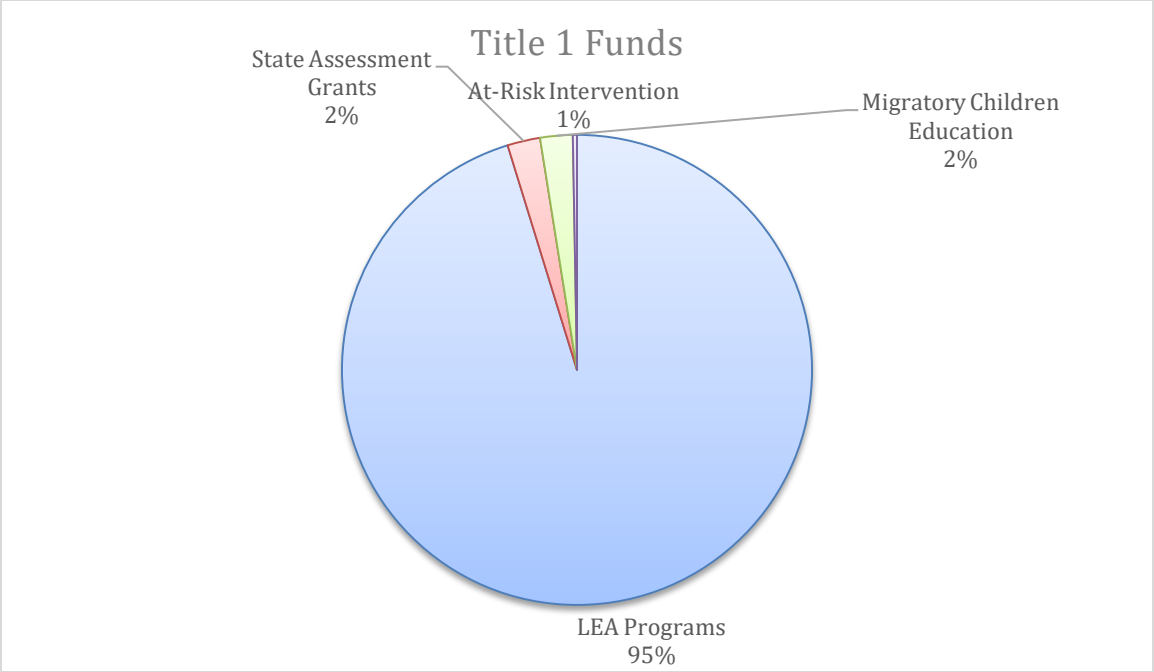


Figure 1: Title 1 funds by use for fiscal year 2020, based on Panos, et al., 2018.

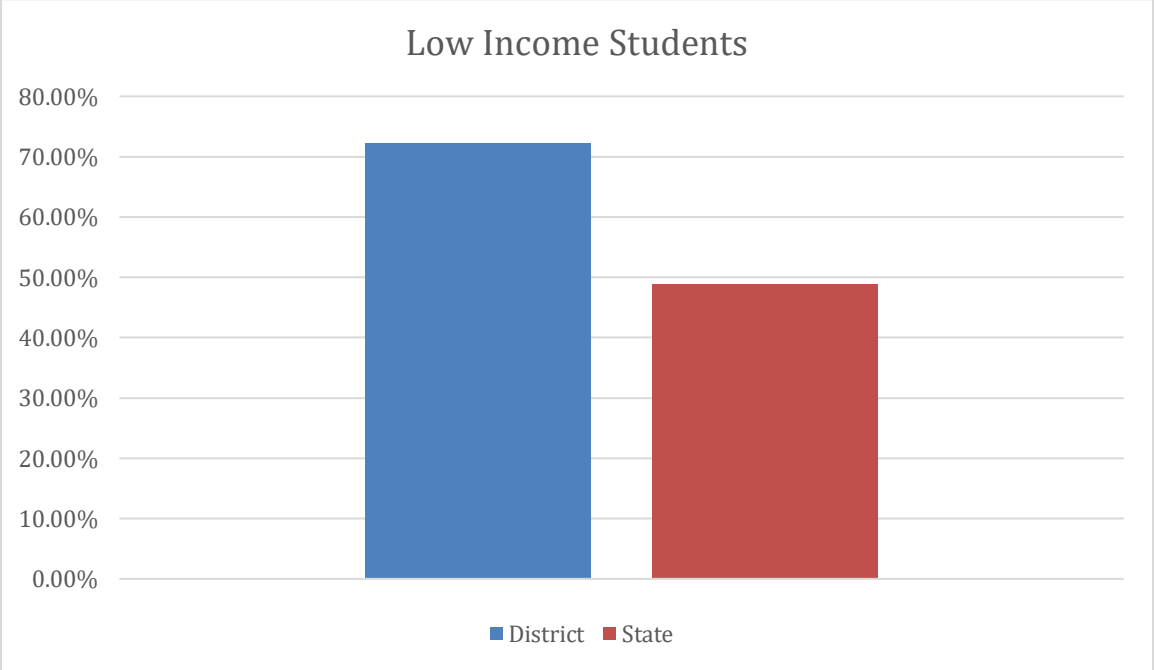


Figure 2: USD 116 low-income students compared to the state, based on Illinois Report Card, 2019.

The 5-year trend for USD 116 as demonstrated on the Illinois Report Card (2019) in Figure 2, shows the district as serving more than 70% identified low-income students. Schools

with more than 40% of their student family population that are considered low-income students are eligible for Title 1 funds that can be used on school-wide or targeted programs which must meet the following requirements: (1) uses a comprehensive needs assessment, (2) uses strategies that support students meeting state standards, (3) strengthens the overall academic program while providing accelerated and enriching activities, (4) focuses on at-risk students, (5) engages parents/family units, and (6) uses progress monitoring and is revised as needed (Panos et al., 2018). According to Panos et al. (2018), districts will often meet these requirements by using Title 1 funds for "broader literacy initiatives as part of a comprehensive school reform strategy," (para. 7) because at the heart of academic success is a student's ability to read and write. Because both schoolwide and targeted assistance programs must illustrate both improvements to student achievement (quantitative) and strategies that involve the family unit (qualitative) a mixed-methods evaluation is recommended (Panos et al., 2018).

The evaluation plan (Appendix A) as outlined uses a combination of approaches including:

- Expertise-oriented: Focus-group with literacy experts
- Consumer-oriented: Consumer guide literacy ranking instrument
- Program-oriented: Evaluation of goals/outcomes instruments
- Decision-oriented: Performance monitoring (formative) in place as well as summative performance data for timely decision-making
- Participant-oriented: Actively engaging those responsible for implementation and those benefiting from the program (interviews, surveys, community group meetings, and observations)

An evaluation team will be organized to include both internal and external evaluators including: two University of Illinois College of Education graduate students, a University of Illinois College of Education Faculty Member, USD 116's Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, two district-level literacy interventionists, one elementary school principal, and one primary teacher from each of the six elementary schools. This team will oversee the execution, organization, analysis, and dissemination of the final reports. The team will begin work in August 2020, will remain active through the first fiscal year of the program (July 2021), and will pass on the long-term monitoring of the program over, the remaining three years (2021-2024), to a core team of decision-makers including the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and the two district-level interventionists.

Evaluation Questions

As previously stated, the purpose of this evaluation is to evaluate multi-sensory systemic teaching paired with synthetic phonics using the Jolly Phonics program in order to determine whether the program would meet the needs of the primary learners in USD 116 and if it would reap long-term benefits for the learners in reading development and literacy acquisition. The results of the evaluation will be used to help principals, literacy interventionists, and district administrators decide if the program should be adopted long-term and throughout all elementary and early elementary classrooms. In order to judge the worth/quality of the Jolly Phonics program, the following evaluation questions will be considered:

1. What is the impact of synthetic phonics instruction on student reading achievement?
2. How effective is multi-sensory systemic teaching when paired with synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics program) compared to analytic phonics or a whole language approach?

3. Have confidence levels improved in the use of Jolly Phonics instruction/strategies for both teachers and students?
4. Have parents'/administrators'/teachers' attitudes regarding the use of Jolly Phonics instruction with students improved as a result of participation in and observation of program activities?
5. Is multi-sensory systemic teaching when paired with synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics Program) appropriate for implementation at the district level?

Stakeholders

Stakeholders for this evaluation include: district students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. On a grander scale, the United States taxpayers are stakeholders as their taxes go to support Title 1 federal funding initiatives such as the one being evaluated here. The University of Illinois' College of Education also serves as a fringe stakeholder as they have agreed to assist USD 116 in the implementation and evaluation of the Jolly Phonics program. Finally, the State of Illinois has a keen interest in the outcome of this evaluation as it oversees statewide assessments and curriculum and it encourages implementation of programs that make a significant impact on student achievement, especially in the area of literacy. The evaluation committee will be responsible for outreach and reporting to key stakeholders throughout the course of the evaluation plan.

Design

As stated earlier, Title 1 funding is provided for programs that are schoolwide and/or targeted and must offer evidence of improvements to student achievement and family unit engagement. These directives will be supported using a mixed-methods evaluation. Data sources will be made up of both existing and original data. Below is a detailed discussion of the data

collection methods/instruments (what), administration (how), participants (who), and timeframe (when) as well as expected results/analysis related to each of the five evaluation questions.

1. *What is the impact of synthetic phonics instruction on student reading achievement?*

Data collection (what, how, who, when)

(A) Existing data which includes student demographics and achievement on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) progress monitoring assessment will be collected. DIBELS was developed and is sustained by the University of Oregon's Center on Teaching and Learning (DIBELS, 2019). DIBELS has been used by teachers since 2001 for improving literacy in Title 1 schools (DIBELS, 2019). DIBELS measures critical literacy skills including phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary (DIBELS, 2019). According to DIBELS' (2019) handout "Approaches and considerations of collecting school-wide early literacy and reading performance data," data should be collected in the fall, winter, and spring (three universal screenings for all students) for the teachers to have the greatest opportunity to adjust reading intervention strategies based on student insights. The following persons can assist in the collection of student literacy skills: administrators, parents, volunteers, practicum students, teachers and teaching assistants, provided they have all received training on administration and scoring (DIBELS, 2019). All students will be assessed using the Administrative Timeline as seen in Appendix B.

(B) Existing data which includes student demographics and achievement on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) will be collected. The IAR is the accountability measurement of academic achievement by all Illinois students enrolled in a public school (ISBE, 2019). The assessment was designed to assess the Illinois Learning and Common Core standards in literacy and mathematics (ISBE, 2019). Pearson Inc. was and is still involved in the design,

administration, and scoring of the assessment which is given to all students in grades 3-8 each March or April via paper or online versions (ISBE, 2018). Teachers are responsible for classroom administration/collection of the tests.

Data analysis and expected results/outcomes

(A) According to DIBELS (2019), criterion-referenced benchmark goals (Appendix C) are used as predictive of later reading success. The goals are based on a large, nationally representative sample (DIBELS, 2019). A case study of teachers at the Valley School in Elgin, IA using the Jolly Phonics program saw 98% of their kindergarten students excelling in DIBELS as seen in Figure 3 (Boehm. et al., 2011). The goal for students being taught using the Jolly Phonics method is to meet or exceed all literacy skill level benchmarks during each of the three universal screenings.

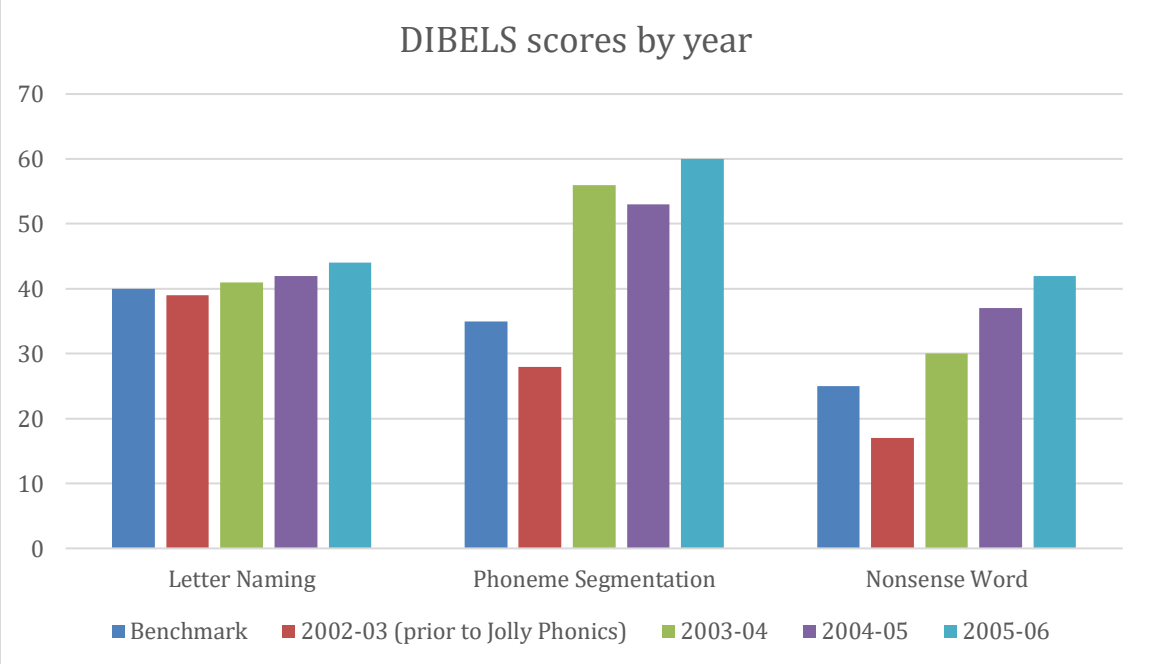


Figure 3: DIBELS scores for Valley School, based on Boehm et al., 2011, p. 3.

(B) Pearson provides assessment of readiness reports which provide data about the state, district, school level as well as information for each grade and content area (ISBE, 2019). Johnston and Watson (2005) reported that in a seven-year longitudinal study on the effects of

synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics) on reading and spelling attainment, students who were taught using a synthetic phonics program were three and a half years ahead of their chronological age in both word recognition and comprehension and over one and a half years ahead in their spelling scores for which the researchers concluded that the "synthetic phonics approach…is more effective than the analytic phonics approach, as part of the reading curriculum, even when it is supplemented with phonemic awareness training" (p. 9). It is expected that similar findings will show on the IAR student standardized assessment over time.

2. *How effective is multi-sensory systemic teaching when paired with synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics program) compared to analytic phonics or a whole language approach?*

Data collection (what, how, who, when)

(A) Existing data including student demographics and classroom comparisons will be collected using AIMSweb, a progress monitoring/benchmark system developed by Pearson Inc. to align with Response to Intervention (RTI) (Pearson, 2009). AIMSweb is used to screen all students three times a year (fall, winter, spring) to determine general academic progress and is used more frequently to monitor instructional strategy changes in students who need more intensive support (Pearson, 2009). The teacher-given screening is paper/pencil style and, like DIBELS, it measures skills in a matter of minutes – then scores are uploaded into the AIMSweb system by classroom teachers (Pearson, 2009). The system charts and reports assessment results on early literacy skills (among other content areas) and can differentiate for early Spanish speaking students (Pearson, 2009). It is ideally designed to report differentiations in student progress depending on the intervention/teaching method students are receiving.

(B) Original data including classroom demographics (i.e. the number of ELL students, grade level, and literacy teaching method) will be collected along with teachers' perceptions

using a questionnaire developed by Ruiz (2014) to evaluate Jolly Phonics as a method for teaching literacy in bilingual classrooms (Appendix D). The questionnaire will be slightly adapted by the evaluation committee because Ruiz originally designed the questionnaire for teachers in Spain who were teaching English as a foreign language. The questionnaire will be provided to all primary level teachers working with bilingual students at the end of the first year (May). Survey questions will seek to learn from the teachers, as stakeholders, their perceptions of each of the three primary literacy teaching methods (analytic phonics, synthetic phonics, whole language) in terms of limitations, obstacles, activities, and preferred strategies.

Data analysis and expected results/outcomes

(A) The AIMSweb universal benchmarking accurately measures student literacy performance while the progress monitoring is sensitive enough to reflect small changes over time (Pearson, 2009). AIMSweb can provide reports by either norm-referenced or criterion-referenced methods (Pearson, 2009). Bennett (2014) found a significant relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension using AIMSweb measurements with a group of fourth-grade students. Synthetic phonics programs like Jolly Phonics are designed to improve student fluency rates and in turn comprehension rates (Jolly Learning, 2018). It is expected that students participating in the Jolly Phonics curriculum will see improvement in their oral reading fluency rates as evidenced through AIMSweb. Because AIMSweb provides sensitive and accurate standardized data, it is the ideal tool for the team to compare student achievement across classrooms using different literacy teaching methods (i.e. synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, and whole language). In a New England based controlled study using Jolly Phonics and AIMSweb data, the number of at-risk students decreased significantly over a 14-week period as illustrated in figure 4 (Swan & Smith-Brock, 2017). The goal for students being taught using the

Jolly Phonics method is to meet or exceed all literacy skill level benchmarks during each of the three universal screenings.

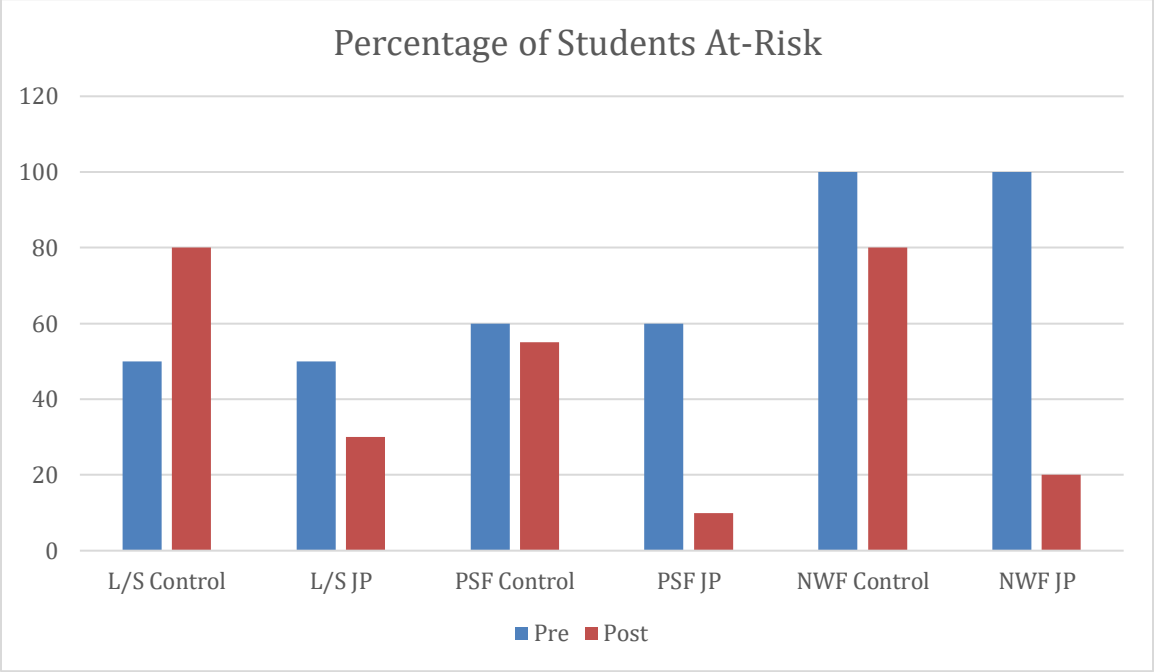


Figure 4: Percentage of at-risk students compared to control group pre- and post- 14-week Jolly Phonics (JP) program (L/S: letter/sound, PSF: phoneme segmentation fluency, NWF: nonsense word fluency), based on Swan and Smith-Brock, 2017.

(B) As with Ruiz's (2014) study, the questionnaire will provide the evaluation committee thematic data that should provide for rich discussions about the merits of each of the different approaches to teaching literacy that may have implications as to the future funding of Jolly Phonics or another reading program. Expected thematic results will likely coincide with Ruiz's (2014) findings that Jolly Phonics' main advantage for English Language Learners is its reliance on a combination of auditory and kinesthetic learning. Ruiz (2014) also highlighted that the songs that accompany the Jolly Phonics program are not helpful for ELL students because the lyrics are not necessarily as meaningful to students whose primary language is not English. To counter this, Ariati, Padmedewi, and Suarnajaya (2017) found that Jolly Phonics was one of the "most effective" strategies for teaching ELL students and the primary issue was teacher

knowledge about implementation. They also found that when songs or activities were adapted to meet the learner's need that the learner's overall English literacy skills greatly advanced (Ariati et al., 2017)

3. *Have confidence levels improved in the use of Jolly Phonics instruction/strategies for both teachers and students?*

Data collection (what, how, who, when)

(A) Original data including classroom demographics and student perceptions of their ability to read will be collected using the Eshiet (2014) Pupil Interview Guide (Appendix E). Eshiet (2014) explored the use of synthetic phonics using the Jolly Phonics program in nine schools with nearly 230 students and found significant improvement in student reading skills. The study was a mixed-methods approach that collected data from: pre/posttests, questionnaires, interviews, observations and artifacts (Eshiet, 2014). The nine-question interview will be administered by classroom teachers using the Jolly Phonics program to their students. The interview is an oral interview – teachers are expected to record their students' verbal feedback and submit the entire interview script to the evaluation committee for their review/analysis. The interviews will be done in the first year of implementation of the Jolly Phonics program in the winter and again in the spring.

(B) Original data including classroom demographics and observation notes will be collected using the Eshiet (2014) Classroom Observation Checklist (Appendix F). Eshiet (2014) explains that structured observation involves the systemic recording of events and behaviors. Members of the evaluation committee will act as observers by visiting classrooms in the fall, winter, and spring that are using the Jolly Phonics program to record and check for key elements of implementation and performance of the program by the teachers and students.

Data analysis and expected results/outcomes

(A) Eshiet (2014) suggests that stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Jolly Phonics program should consider the students' perspectives in order for their voices to be heard. The interview as designed by Eshiet (2014) is to mimic a casual chat between teacher and student in order to capture authentic themes as to how much the student enjoys learning under the Jolly Phonics program, what it is they believe they have learned, what they liked best, what if anything they found difficult and whether, in the end, they perceived themselves to be better readers. Eshiet (2014) found that 88% of the students interviewed wanted to continue learning with the Jolly Phonics program and those who didn't want to continue said they could read now and no longer needed the phonics instruction. It is expected that a similar percentage will be found in the spring interview analysis and that the winter data will show more students wanting to continue learning phonics and fewer seeing themselves as solid. Eshiet's (2014) checklist focuses on the observation of: teaching basic skills, student engagement/participation, peer collaboration, and teacher/student attitudes.

(B) Eshiet (2014) says that observation is an important data source because it allows for the collection of concrete descriptions and can capture complex interactions that can reveal authentic attitudes and beliefs. Because the teachers and students are the primary stakeholders in the use of the Jolly Phonics program it is important that their actions be taken into account in order to provide a more holistic evaluation. Eshiet (2014) shares that the data were analyzed and coded according to Dixon's (2009) (as cited in Eshiet, 2014) concept of "The 5-Ps" – participation, pace, purpose, passion and positive teaching. Eshiet's (2014) observation study revealed that teachers using the Jolly Phonics program invested a great deal of time/effort in teaching students how to read and the results were statistically significant. In Figure 5, Eisheit

(2016) illustrates the increase in average reading age (Burt Reading Tests, 1974) made by both younger and older students using the Jolly Phonics program. Expected outcomes for the USD 116 classrooms implementing the Jolly Phonics program should yield similar results both in student perceptions about themselves as readers and improvement in their reading age.

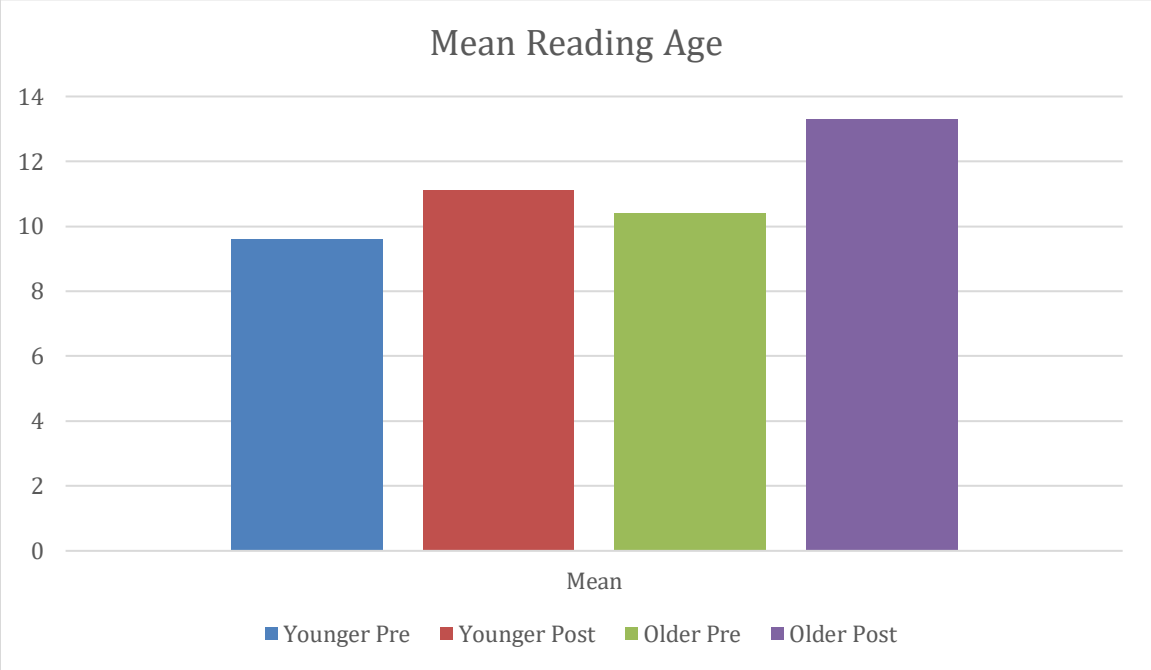


Figure 5: Comparison of the reading age pre- and post-assessment by grade level, based on Eshiet, 2016, p. 17.

4. *Have parents', administrators', teachers' attitudes regarding the use of Jolly Phonics instruction with students improved as a result of participation in and observation of program activities?*

Data collection (what, how, who, when)

(A) Original data on teachers' attitudes toward synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics) and their insights into their experiences with parental and administrative responses to the program will be collected. The questionnaire (developed by the evaluation committee – Appendix G) is to be administered by the evaluation committee and given to classroom teachers using the Jolly

Phonics program. Teachers will complete the survey questionnaire at the beginning of the first year (September) and again at the end of the first year of implementation (May).

(B) Original data will be collected on attitudes toward and recommendations for or against the use of the Jolly Phonics program. The evaluation committee will hold one after-hours community group meeting at each of the Jolly Phonics' host schools and invite teachers, administrators, parents, and even students to share their experiences with the program. An evaluation committee member will act as a facilitator for the open forum discussion while another committee member will record the attitudes/perceptions regarding issues and concerns, barriers and resistance, feedback and recommendations for the use of and potential expansion of the Jolly Phonics program.

Data analysis and expected results/outcomes

(A) The Likert-based questionnaire will provide descriptive statistics on teachers' attitudes and insights into the Jolly Phonics program. As major stakeholders, teachers can provide their own professional opinions as to the worth/value of the program, and they can also share their experiences as to how both parents and administration have responded to the program. As designed, the questionnaire can provide a visual rating for decision-makers to reflect upon regarding sustainment and increased use of the Jolly Phonics program based on the teacher provided data. A case study of a school in Palatine, IL, found that after teachers had implemented the Jolly Phonics program their responses had changed from "unsure about using a program that was direct and systematic" to "wouldn't give it up" (Clark et al., 2011). The expected outcomes for the questionnaire will likely result in similar attitudes being displayed through more agreement rather than disagreement on the rating scale.

(B) Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2010) say that forums with community members are a "critical way to engage audiences in the evaluation process and increase their ultimate influence" (p. 478). As the most important people in the judgment of the quality/merit of the Jolly Phonics program a community forum allows parents, teachers, and students to have their voices heard. Fitzpatrick et al. (2010) says that analysis of the qualitative data collected through stakeholder forums will result in "issue-relevant meanings" that can be used by the evaluation committee to interpret the overall study results and reach a judgment about the program (p. 446-447). According to the Jolly Learning company (2012) and testimony videos, parents are impressed with the speed and progress their students make using the program, especially when compared to the whole language approach. In the United Kingdom, a parent advocacy group led a campaign for the "better teaching" of reading as related to the English Language (RRF, 2019). In 2007 the Reading Reform Foundation (RRF) won a campaign establishing that all schools in England must use synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics) for the initial teaching of reading (RRF, 2019). Expected outcomes for the forum are likely to align with the passion/commitment of the parents in the United Kingdom and elsewhere around the globe who have seen positive results in their own children's ability to be more fluent in English and thus will want to see the program continued and expanded.

5. *Is multi-sensory systemic teaching when paired with synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics Program) appropriate for implementation at the district level?*

Data collection (what, how, who, when)

(A) Original data including expert opinions regarding the use of synthetic phonics instruction in early childhood education will be collected. The evaluation committee under the direction of the University of Illinois committee members will arrange for a focus group of

experts in the College of Education to speak to evidenced-based early literacy programs including the use of Jolly Phonics. The focus group will meet with members of the evaluation committee by May of the first year of implementation in order to address key insights using the same questions Scholastic, Inc. asked Wiley Blevins, educator, author and editorial specialist on early reading (Appendix H).

(B) Existing data will be collected through a literature review on the use of synthetic phonics instruction in early childhood education. The graduate student members of the evaluation committee will complete an annotated bibliography of information regarding best/leading practices in literacy and early education specifically focusing on the use of multi-sensory systemic teaching paired with synthetic phonics. The annotated bibliography will be completed prior to May and shared out with the whole of the evaluation committee.

(C) Original data will be collected from results gathered from the University of Oregon's "Consumer's Guide to Analyzing a Core Reading Program." (ORFC, 2006). The Oregon Reading First Center (ORFC) is a part of the Center on Teaching and Learning through the College of Education at the University of Oregon. The ORFC under the direction of Drs. Simmons and Kame'enui (2006) developed the consumer's guide to evaluate core reading programs and to help schools in their selection and adoption efforts by identifying key elements of an efficient, effective, and evidence-based schoolwide reading program. The evaluation committee members will work through the consumer guide together to determine if the Jolly Phonics program meets or exceeds criterion measures, only partially meets or exceeds measures, or fails to meet critical elements entirely. Simmons and Kame'enui (2006) will take the committee members through a two-stage consumer-based evaluation process: (1) determining if

there is trustworthy evidence of program efficacy, and (2) reviewing the program against an analysis of the critical elements.

Data analysis and expected results/outcomes

(A) Fitzpatrick et al. (2010) suggest that in "the United States, most federal government agencies make use of funding panels – panels of experts in the research area to be funded – to read proposals, discuss them, and make recommendations" (p. 138). Because Title 1 is a federally funded program, making use of experts in USD 116's own community through the University of Illinois allows for a high-level of judgment about the use of synthetic phonics. Fitzpatrick et al. (2010) caution that "experts may have a major impact" in terms of their recommendations but "they might also be ignored" because their recommendations aren't formalized (p. 139). Blevins (2019) shared that the goal of phonics instruction is to help students decode words at a more fluent rate which in turn improves reading comprehension. Blevins (2019) also shares that a good phonics program uses systemic/explicit lessons in sound-spelling awareness. It is expected that many of the experts during the focus group will agree with Blevins and see the potential of the Jolly Phonics program to have a significant impact because it relies on guided opportunities for learners to practice sounding out and blending phonemes.

(B) Fitzpatrick et al. (2010) share that it's not uncommon for evaluators to perform literature reviews. They share that doing so can provide evidence-based research that challenges or supports assumptions about the program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010). Eshiet (2014) concluded through a review of the literature that the use of synthetic phonics with students improves overall literacy skills (Appendix I). Expected outcomes suggest that the University of Illinois graduate students will conclude a similar theme.

(C) The ORFC was the first to use the "Consumer's Guide to Analyzing a Core Reading Program" and in so doing they reviewed both core and supplemental programs for 34 schools in Oregon. The Jolly Phonics program was reviewed in 2000 for phonemic awareness and phonics only for grades K-1. The reviewers determined that as a program it only met 50% of the critical elements for the two skill components being assessed (Appendix J). Expected outcomes may result in a higher rating using the updated 2006 guide and the 2018 newly revised Jolly Phonics program.

Discussion

Potential Barriers

There are a few potential barriers to the evaluation study. First, as mentioned in the beginning, the Jolly Phonics program represents a paradigm shift for teachers, parents, and administrators who are used to a more traditional "Letter of the Week" and whole language approach to the teaching of early reading. The Jolly Phonics program does not follow an alphabetic order and instead of 26 letters, it asks students to learn 42 phonemes along with kinesthetic motion and a song to accompany each one. Fitzpatrick et al. (2010) suggest that people tend to hold on to or advocate for models that are part of their reality. People are often "unwilling to make program changes on the basis of evaluation information" (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010, p. 268). The teachers are going to have to have buy-in and a willingness to commit to the new and additional work/effort required of them to complete the program. To counter this, teachers are asked to participate in the evaluation process in a number of different ways in order for them as participants to say what they gained from the program, what challenges they faced and what changes they would recommend (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010). Another potential barrier is the transient nature of students and faculty, especially those residing in a college town. It will be

difficult to evaluate/monitor students coming in and out of the program over a four-year period. However, the bulk of the data will be collected in the first year in an attempt to mitigate the impact of a transient community. Finally, the data collection tools are a combination of standardized assessments and other assessments either created or adapted to meet the needs of this evaluation. This can have the potential to introduce bias and issues around reliability and validity to the overall conclusion and recommendations. Nonetheless, Fitzpatrick et al. (2010) suggest that it is important for an evaluation approach to be more "eclectic and adaptive" and find the more balanced/enriched picture of a program by combining qualitative and quantitative measures (p.493).

Dissemination

The dissemination of evaluation results will vary and go beyond just reporting to the evaluation committee. The standardized assessments including DIBELS, AIMSweb, and IAR are already shared with teachers, administrators, parents, and state agencies as determined by the assessment administrators. As for the original data collected. results will be shared during the community group meeting in a short form – both verbally and in an engaging one-page handout that highlights major insights to-date (Appendix K). The committee will also be keeping a progress blog with listserv where interested stakeholders can sign up to receive updates throughout the evaluation process. The committee will also be sharing an annual report at the May school board meeting in order to seek approval for future funding for each of the first three years. At the end of the four-year process, a formal/fully written report will be presented at the school board meeting in May and will be accompanied by a presentation that will be shared out via the district website. If the district chooses to continue on with the Jolly Phonics program on an annual basis, information about the program and program results to-date will be shared with

parents via school newsletters and websites. The district will also develop a webpage devoted to information and resources about best practices for using the Jolly Phonics program at school and at home. The goal in each communication piece surrounding the dissemination of the results is to provide the information in a way that is “understandable and responsive to each stakeholder group’s norms and values” (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010).

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Appendix A

Evaluation Plan

Table 1

Evaluating Multi-Sensory Systemic Teaching Paired with Synthetic Phonics using the Jolly Phonics Program

Questions	**1.** What is the impact of synthetic phonics instruction on student reading achievement?	**2.** How effective is multi-sensory systemic teaching when paired with synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics Program) compared to analytic phonics or a whole language approach?	**3.** Have confidence levels improved in the use of Jolly Phonics instruction/strategies for both teachers and students?	**4.** Have parents', administrators', teachers' attitudes regarding the use of Jolly Phonics instruction with students improved as a result of participation in and observation of program activities?	**5.** Is multi-sensory systemic teaching when paired with synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics Program) appropriate for implementation at the district level?
Data Information Sources	**(A)** Existing data including student demographics and achievement on progress monitoring assessments **(B)** Existing data including student demographics and achievement on longitudinal state-wide exams	**(A)** Existing data including comparison data of classes using synthetic phonics vs analytic phonics **(B)** Original data including a survey of teachers to determine the impact of the program in the context of bilingual education	**(A)** Original data including a survey of students' perceptions of their ability to read and their impressions of the Jolly Phonics program **(B)** Original data including external observations of both teacher and student use of synthetic phonics in the classroom	**(A)** Original data including a survey of teachers regarding their attitudes towards synthetic phonics (i.e. Jolly Phonics) and their experiences with parental and administrative responses to the use of the program **(B)** Original data including a community group meeting with teachers, parents, and administrators regarding their attitudes towards synthetic phonics implementation and outcomes	**(A)** Original data including expert opinions regarding the use of synthetic phonics instruction in early childhood education (B) Existing data including results gathered from a literature review on the use of synthetic phonics instruction in early childhood education **(C)** Original data including results gathered from the ORFC's Consumer's Guide to Evaluating Supplemental and Intervention Programs (ORFC, 2006)
Data Collection Methods & Participants	**(A)** Progress monitoring assessments - students **(B)** State-wide reading exams (longitudinal) - students	**(A)** Progress monitoring assessments - students **(B)** Survey – teachers in a bilingual classroom using Jolly Phonics or those with ESL students in general education classroom	**(A)** Interview – students **(B)** Observation notes - teachers, students, observer	**(A)** Survey - teachers **(B)** Community group meeting - teachers, parents, administrators, and discussion leader/facilitator	**(A)** Focus group transcript/notes - experts and evaluation committee **(B)** Literature review - evaluation committee **(C)** Consumer's guide – evaluation committee and district literacy coaches
Data Instruments, Administration & Timeframe **what, how, who, when*	**(A)** DIBELS developed by the University of Oregon and used by educators since 2001; individual timed reading assessments administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year **(B)** Illinois Assessment of Readiness developed by Illinois stakeholders and educators to align to the Illinois Learning Standards - originally developed with the nonprofit New Meridian (2015) but switched to Pearson in 2019; statewide assessment for all grades 3-8 (online and paper-based); every March - April	**(A)** AIMSweb developed by Pearson as part of the RTI movement and IDEA 2004; paper/pencil administration done individually or in groups depending on the measure and takes on average 1-4 minutes to complete each measure; benchmarking is done in the fall, winter and spring **(B)** A questionnaire developed by Ruiz (2014) to evaluate Jolly Phonics as a method for teaching literacy in a bilingual classroom; questionnaire will need to be slightly adapted as it was originally designed for teachers in Spain teaching English as a foreign language; in May of following year one.	**(A)** Reading Interview developed by Eshiet (2014) to be given individually and orally to uncover students' perceptions of themselves as readers and their attitude towards the synthetic phonics; to be given by classroom teachers in the winter and spring of the first year to all students learning under the Jolly Phonics program **(B)** In-class observations conducted by members of the evaluation team in the fall, winter, and spring using an observation checklist designed by Eshiet (2014) during the first-year implementation	**(A)** A questionnaire developed by the evaluation team and given to teachers pre & post-first-year implementation **(B)** Community group meeting of no more than 30-40 participants (if over that number divided into smaller groups) with a designated recorder for each group to record the discussion of attitudes/perceptions regarding the program (issues & concerns, barriers & resistance, feedback & recommendations); completed post-first-year implementation	**(A)** Focus group questions adapted from an interview with Wiley Blevins (2019) Editorial Specialist for Early Reading at Scholastic Inc. by the evaluation team to collect expert opinions in the area of literacy and early education completed by May in order for recommendations to be considered prior to July budget adoption **(B)** A literature review completed by the UIUC committee members in order to provide summary information on best/leading practices in literacy and early education specifically the use of multi-sensory systemic teaching paired with synthetic phonics; to be completed by May for budgetary purposes **(C)** A critical review of the reading program developed by the University of Oregon (2006) to be completed by the evaluation committee and district literacy coaches in order to provide an analysis of the program from a consumer perspective; to be completed by May for budgetary purposes
Data Analysis	**(A)** Descriptive statistics **(B)** Descriptive statistics	**(A)** Descriptive statistics **(B)** Themes	**(A)** Themes & Comparisons **(B)** Themes & Comparisons	**(A)** Descriptive statistics **(B)** Themes & Recommendations	**(A)** Themes & Recommendations **(B)** Themes & Recommendations **(C)** Ratings & Recommendations

Appendix B

Timeline

Table 2

DIBELS administrative timeline

Measure	Measurement	Periods
LNF	Letter Naming Fluency	Beginning K – End 1st grade
PSF	Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	Beginning K – End 1st grade
NWF	Nonsense Word Fluency	Beginning K – Mid 4th grade
WRF	Word Reading Fluency	Beginning K – Mid 4th grade
ORF	Oral Reading Fluency	End K – End 8th grade
MAZE	Comprehension	End 1st grade – End 9th grade

Source: Based on DIBELS, 2019.

Appendix C

Benchmark Goals

		LNF	PSF	NWF-CLS	NWF-WRC	WRF	ORF	ORF-ACC	Maze	Composite
Kindergarten	Beginning	--	20+	20+	--	--				332+
		25+	**12-19**	**10-19**	**1+**	**1+**				**306-331**
		16-24	7-11	4-9	--	--				280-305
		0-15	0-6	0-3	0	0				200-279
	Middle	--	43+	36+	9+	10+				393+
		37+	**32-42**	**26-35**	**4-8**	**5-9**				**373-392**
		31-36	23-31	17-25	2-3	1-4				360-372
		0-30	0-22	0-16	0-1	0				200-359
	End	--	53+	41+	13+	14+				452+
		42+	**47-52**	**33-40**	**8-12**	**10-13**				**428-451**
		35-41	37-46	24-32	4-7	6-9				406-427
		0-34	0-36	0-23	0-3	0-5				200-405
First Grade	Beginning	--	51+	47+	16+	20+	35+	--		350+
		51+	**39-50**	**42-46**	**8-15**	**15-19**	**21-34**	**67+**		**331-349**
		42-50	29-38	25-41	1-7	8-14	5-20	41-66		323-330
		0-41	0-28	0-24	0	0-7	0-4	0-40		200-322
	Middle	--	57+	68+	20+	32+	51+	--		401+
		60+	**43-56**	**54-67**	**10-19**	**17-31**	**35-50**	**87+**		**386-400**
		54-59	34-42	41-53	5-9	13-16	10-34	54-86		375-385
		0-53	0-33	0-40	0-4	0-12	0-9	0-53		200-374
	End	--	61+	87+	25+	50+	76+	--		479+
		63+	**45-60**	**60-86**	**15-24**	**25-49**	**44-75**	**91+**		**441-478**
		58-62	40-44	49-59	7-14	20-24	28-43	85-90		422-440
		0-57	0-39	0-48	0-6	0-19	0-27	0-84		200-421
Second Grade	Beginning			72+	25+	52+	85+	--	11.0+	352+
				55-71	**15-24**	**30-51**	**51-84**	**92+**	**5.0-10.5**	**330-351**
				43-54	8-14	20-29	35-50	84-91	2.5-4.5	316-329
				0-42	0-7	0-19	0-34	0-83	0-2.0	200-315
	Middle			92+	36+	63+	105+	--	16.0+	421+
				64-91	**23-35**	**37-62**	**73-104**	**97+**	**10.0-15.5**	**385-420**
				56-63	15-22	28-36	59-72	91-96	8.0-9.5	373-384
				0-55	0-14	0-27	0-58	0-90	0-7.5	200-372
	End			117+	39+	72+	128+	--	20.5+	477+
				76-116	**24-38**	**46-71**	**94-127**	**98+**	**11.0-20.0**	**440-476**
				59-75	17-23	31-45	79-93	--	8.0-10.5	418-439
				0-58	0-16	0-30	0-78	0-97	0-7.5	200-417
Third Grade	Beginning			121+	34+	60+	104+	--	15.0+	363+
				81-120	**24-33**	**46-59**	**77-103**	**98+**	**9.0-14.5**	**332-362**
				71-80	18-23	32-45	61-76	94-97	5.0-8.5	314-331
				0-70	0-17	0-31	0-60	0-93	0-4.5	200-313
	Middle			133+	40+	65+	132+	--	21.5	427+
				104-132	**30-39**	**53-64**	**105-131**	**98+**	**14.0-21.0**	**395-426**
				90-103	23-29	45-52	88-104	--	10.5-13.5	377-394
				0-89	0-22	0-44	0-87	0-97	0-10.0	200-376
	End			146+	45+	71+	136+	--	25.5	467+
				112-145	**31-44**	**55-70**	**112-135**	**99+**	**19.5-25.0**	**442-466**
				93-111	24-30	49-54	96-111	--	13.0-19.0	424-441
				0-92	0-23	0-48	0-95	0-98	0-12.5	200-423

Legend

Blue goal = Core support; Negligible risk (< 10% chance of not achieving at or above 40th percentile on criterion measure)
Green range = Core support; Minimal risk (< 20% chance of not achieving at or above 40th percentile on criterion measure)
Yellow range = Strategic support; Some risk (>20% chance of not achieving at or above 40th percentile on criterion measure)
Red range = Intensive support; At risk (>20% chance of not achieving at or above 20th percentile on criterion measure)

Source: DIBELS 8th edition criterion-referenced benchmark goals, from DIBELS, 2019 (https://dibels.uoregon.edu/docs/DIBELS8thEditionGoals.pdf). Copyright University of Oregon.

Appendix D

Bilingual Survey

Table 3

Survey for bilingual teachers using Jolly Phonics

Questions	Options
1. What is your opinion of the program as an ELL method?	Poor, some deficiencies, good, excellent
2. In your opinion, what are the main deficiencies of the program?	Material is isolated and decontextualized, material is created for native learners, material serves no communicative purpose, material has little variety of structure/input, material has little to no interaction
3. In your opinion, what are the obstacles for students learning using the program?	Gestures are not meaningful, melodies are confusing, difficult vocabulary in the songs, inadequate song sequence, too repetitive, not a one-to-one correspondence, other
4. In your opinion, what are the most important reading supplements needed to accompany the Jolly Phonics program?	Emphasis on comprehension, information presented in a more meaningful way, purposeful rereading of the text, guessing unfamiliar words using context clues or prior knowledge, spelling correctly, variety
5. In your opinion, which skill of the whole language method should be taught alongside synthetic phonics?	Global recognition of words, visual skill, use of context and prior knowledge, comprehension
6. What activities do you use to supplement the Jolly Phonics program?	Storytelling, vocabulary games, speaking activities, dramatizations, physical response games, nursery rhymes and songs, videos, listening comprehension activities, other
7. What strategies do you use to solve any deficiencies with the program?	Change the gestures, simplify the songs, change the sequence, use active games, use other visual materials, other

Source: Based on Ruiz, 2014, pp. 42-47.

Appendix E

Student Interview

Table 4

Student interview about reading ability

Questions	Interview Notes
1. Do you enjoy learning Jolly Phonics?	
2. Do you enjoy performing Jolly Phonics in class?	
3. What do you enjoy best about Jolly Phonics?	
4. Were you able to read before learning about Jolly Phonics?	
5. Are you able to read now because of Jolly Phonics?	
6. What is your favorite Jolly Phonics activity (songs, games, stories)?	
7. Do you want to continue to learn more Jolly Phonics when you go to the next grade level?	
8. Was learning Jolly Phonics hard at all? If yes, what was hard?	

Source: Based on Eshiet, 2014, p. 312

Appendix F

Checklist

Table 5

Classroom observation checklist

Actions	Notes
1. Teacher used program flashcards	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
2. Teacher told the "sound" story in an interesting way	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
3. Teacher used the correct should to grapheme	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
4. Teacher used correct sound formation/hand signal	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
5. Teacher used workbook with students	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
6. Teacher incorporated games into the lesson	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
7. Teacher used appropriate pace	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
8. Entire class participated in lesson	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
9. Teacher teaches with passion/enthusiasm	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
10. Teacher uses praise	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
11. Students illustrated word blending	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
12. Students illustrated appropriate blending	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
13. Students participated in partner or group work	Observed: Yes or No Comments:
14. Students show purpose in their work	Observed: Yes or No Comments:

Source: Based on Eshiet, 2014, p. 315-316

Appendix G

Teacher Survey

Table 6

Jolly Phonics Effectiveness Teacher Survey

Please check the box that corresponds best to your opinion on each of the following topics

Topic	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Students learn best when using multisensory teaching strategies					
2. Students respond better when using a synthetic phonics approach rather than an analytic phonics approach or whole language approach to teaching reading.					
3. Teaching using the Jolly Phonics program is easy to implement.					
4. Parents have responded well to the implementation of the Jolly Phonics program.					
5. Parents have been following through with helping their student(s) at home practice the Jolly Phonics program.					
6. The administration is supportive of the Jolly Phonics program.					
7. The students are motivated and seem eager to participate in program activities.					
8. The Jolly Phonics is a comprehensive phonics program that requires no additional/supplemental materials.					
9. The district should invest Title 1 funds towards the Jolly Phonics program for districtwide implementation.					
10. Students are learning to read at a faster pace using the Jolly Phonics program than other programs previously used.					

Source: Original creation for evaluation proposal

Appendix H

Expert Focus Group

Table 7

Facilitator questions for literacy experts' focus group

Questions	Notes
1. What is phonics? And what type of approach is the most well-researched?	
2. How is phonemic awareness different from phonics?	
3. Does phonics relate to reading comprehension? In what way?	
4. What type of phonics skills should students be taught at each grade level?	
5. What does a good phonics lesson look like at each grade level?	
6. What is the best approach/program for students at large and for those who struggle with reading?	

Source: Based on Blevins, 2019.

Appendix I

Sample Literature Review Matrix

Unit Being Characterised	Total system	Intermediate Units	Individual Level
The Policy	Teacher training and Primary 1and2 curriculum.	Are teachers trained to teach reading? Does the pry 1 and 2 curriculum show effectiveness? Is the curriculum viewed as sufficient guide?	Existing literature and the national English Curriculum
Schools Management type	Government and Private	What are the class sizes in each management type? What is the obvious degree of availability of materials	Will these affect ability to teach and learn in a significant manner? Motivation of teachers and comfort or otherwise of pupils? Pre-training teacher focus group and classroom observation
The teachers	Qualification and years of experience. Do the teachers have English qualification? Qualification in Education? How many years' teaching experience has the teacher?	Study if the teacher factors have effect on the teachers' effectiveness in delivering the teaching.	Do the teachers think the training in synthetic phonics is a useful one? How does their knowledge or lack of it affect teachers' ability to teach reading? Teacher focus groups before and after the intervention. Can teachers compare the proficiency of

Source: Literacy analysis comparison matrix, from Eshiet, 2014. (https://jolly2.s3.amazonaws.com/Research/Busola%20PhD%20.pdf). Copyright Olubusola Inyang Eshiet.

Appendix J

Consumer Guide

Reviewer Code/Name: _____ **KINDERGARTEN** ***Critical Elements Analysis*** *8*

Phonemic Awareness *is the ability to hear and manipulate the sound structure of language. It is a strong predictor of reading success. Phonemic awareness is an auditory skill and consists of multiple components.*

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Instruction				
Rating	Criterion	Evidence		
		Initial Instruction	Week_____	Week _____
● ○ ○ □ □ □	1. Progresses from the easier phonemic awareness activities to the more difficult (e.g., isolation, blending, segmentation, and manipulation). ***(ss)***			
● ○ ○ □ □ □	2. Teaches new phonemic awareness skills explicitly using multiple models. ***(w)***			
● ○ ○ □ □ □	3. Teaches phonemic awareness skills systematically. ***(w)***			
● ○ ○ □ □ □	4. Following teacher models, provides multiple opportunities for students to respond orally. ***(w)***			
● ○ ○ □ □ □	5. Integrates letter-sound correspondence instruction to phonological awareness/phonemic awareness. ***(w)***			
● ○ ○ □ □ □	6. In second half of kindergarten, focuses on segmentation or the combination of blending and segmentation. ***(ss)***			
● ○ ○	7. Analyzes words at the phoneme level			

Source: Literacy analysis comparison matrix, from Simmons and Kame'enui, 2006. (http://reading.uoregon.edu/resources/con_guide_aug_2006.doc). Copyright University of Oregon.

Appendix H

Examples of Evaluation One-Page Reports



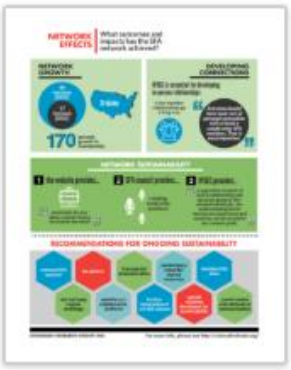
South Seattle College (2018) | Emma Perk & Lyssa Wilson Becho



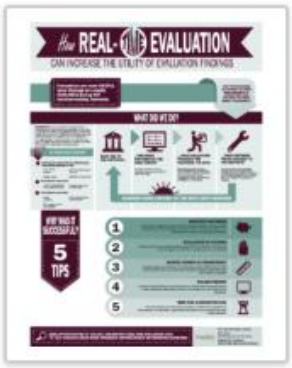
EvaluATE Webinar (2017) | Emma Perk & Lyssa Wilson Becho



Science Festival Alliance (Page 1) | Goodman Research Group, Inc.



Science Festival Alliance (Page 2) | Goodman Research Group, Inc.



How Real Time Evaluation | Magnolia Consulting



UASTEC Report (2017) | Cosgrove & Associates

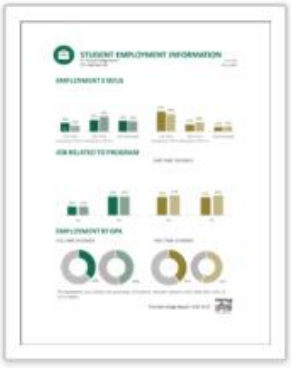


Life Guide Program Overview (2017) | Lyssa Wilson & Kelly Robertson



Life Guide Program (2017) | Lyssa Wilson & Kelly Robertson









Source: Engaging one-page evaluation report summaries, from Evaluate, 2019. (http://www.evalu-ate.org/one-pagers/#examples). Copyright Western Michigan University.