THEME OVERVIEW
CONSISTENT USE OF DATA TO INFORM INSTRUCTION

Four outlier teacher teams excelling in first grade literacy were interviewed to understand their practices contributing to grade-level success while implementing the Science of Reading. Three themes were identified. Key research and literature, practices, and takeaways from the theme Consistent Use of Data to Inform Instruction are in this brief. To review the full report visit schools.utah.gov/ulead/reports.

Key Research & Literature

Data-driven instruction is a multi-faceted approach: The collaborative process involves not only collecting and analyzing data but also using pedagogical and content knowledge to translate data into actionable instructional plans (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2019; Wilcox et al., 2021).

Effective data use requires more than just data literacy: Teachers need to combine data analysis skills with understanding progress monitoring tools, selecting appropriate assessments, and understanding student learning trajectories (Institute of Education Sciences, 2018; Mandinach & Gummer, 2016; Schifter et al., 2014).

Data should be used to guide instructional decisions and interventions: The practice that follows data collection and analysis is critical to student success and empowers teachers to make effective instructional decisions (Hattie, 2012; Neuman et al., 2016; Schildkamp et al., 2019).

Practitioner Practices

Overall, the outlier teams demonstrated a data-driven, collaborative approach to instruction that focused on clear learning goals, frequent monitoring, and responsive adjustments to ensure all students reach their full potential.

1. Teachers' **deep understanding of the Science of Reading** informed their assessment and instructional choices, enabling explicit instruction and targeted skill development.
2. **Teams collaborated to create highly focused and specific assessments** that aligned with learning trajectories and allowed for targeted intervention and extension opportunities.
3. Teachers engaged in both formal and informal data discussions, **using data to inform instructional adjustments and grouping decisions**.
4. Teams utilized various structures for collaborative intervention and extension time, ensuring that **all students received targeted support or enrichment.**
5. **Teams prioritized consistency** in intervention implementation, PLC meetings, and instructional delivery, while setting **high expectations for student achievement.**

Top Takeaways

1. Know standards, skills, scope, and sequence
2. Regularly monitor and discuss student learning
3. Share students
4. Maintain consistency
5. Pursue recent goals using data as evidence

"I was using phonics before, but not with the same level of explicitness and the explicit instruction is making a huge difference."
    - 1st Grade Teacher

"There is a lot of power in knowing what we are testing, why we are testing it, and how we prepare. We can't be clear with students if we aren't clear."
    - 1st Grade Teacher