

SUPPORTING THE SCIENCE OF READING: INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN CLARITY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seven focus groups were conducted with 20 teachers and five learning coaches across the identified Title 1 and non-Title 1 school grade level teams to illuminate reading practices that have contributed to student success.

The practice sites for this study included six schools and seven grade level teams who taught at Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools in Washington County School District.

Kindergarten

LaVerkin Elementary

South Mesa Elementary

1st Grade

Water Canyon Elementary

Arrowhead Elementary

2nd Grade

Heritage Elementary

Crimson View Elementary

3rd Grade

South Mesa Elementary

Through legislation, Utah has established a goal of 70% of students in third grade reading on grade level by July 2027 and initiated important changes to how schools curate curriculum and deliver reading instruction. Teachers throughout the state continue to engage with learning about the Science of Reading (SOR), but implementation efforts and results vary.

Outlier schools in one large school district implementing Science of Reading were interviewed about their practices with Science of Reading and Response to Intervention (RTI). While initially intended to illuminate successful Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and RTI practices, this study instead found four themes that highly align to Instructional Design Clarity among effective teachers.

Theme 1: Student Learning Oriented

Theme 2: Goal Oriented

Theme 3: Continuous Collaboration

Theme 4: Robust School District Supports

Schools can best facilitate similar outcomes by:

1. Supporting Effective Goal Setting Structures
2. Reducing Friction to Data Access
3. Facilitating Focus
4. Providing Ongoing Professional Learning

This report describes how teachers implement these four themes in their daily work, the related research that supports each practice, and how these structures contribute to highly effective teaching practices.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic (ULEAD) Education was created to find, research, and highlight proven practices in Utah schools for replication statewide. ULEAD partners with practitioners, researchers, and education organizations to develop and curate resources, foster collaboration, and drive systemic change for improved student outcomes. The ULEAD Clearinghouse is a growing repository of innovative, effective, and efficient practice resources and tools to support educators.

The ULEAD Steering Committee, composed of current Utah educators and stakeholders, meets quarterly to inform the focus priorities that ULEAD will research. ULEAD uses data to find positive outliers in each focus area and create reports, such as this one, illuminating the practices and policies that lead to positive outcomes. At the time of this report, these priorities include: Student Attendance, Educator Retention and Job Satisfaction,

Academic Achievement through Strategic Engagement through Technology, and Academic Success through Social Emotional Supports Grounded in Academic Classroom Practice, with an emphasis on middle grade mathematics and multilingual learner achievement.

This report addresses effective teaching and planning strategies in early literacy.

ULEAD collaborates with Institutes of Higher Education and education practitioners to develop Innovative Practice Reports. This report was developed in partnership with Utah State University.

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