Longitudinal replication of a Tier II intervention model for struggling readers across grades 1-12

Kathleen J. Brown, Matthew K. Fields, Grace Craig & Kelly P. Robbins
(Kathleen.Brown@utah.edu) (Matt.Fields@utah.edu) (Grace.Craig@utah.edu) (Kelly.P.Robbins@utah.edu)

University of Utah Reading Clinic

INTRODUCTION
The purpose of the study was to investigate the longitudinal efficacy of a Tier II intervention model (U Steps) for struggling readers in grades 1 through 12 in Tier I schools. The study was based on several quasi-experiments published in the research literature nearly 20 years ago and implemented consistently since then. This paper presents the course of reading development from "Learning About Print" (Early Steps [ES]), to "The Power of Practice" (Middle Steps [MS]), to "Going For Fluency" (Higher Steps [HS]).

METHODS

Participants:
3,255 ethnically and socioeconomically diverse struggling readers (as identified by screening instruments and teacher recommendations) from 80 Tier I schools in grades 1 through 12. Approximately 1,400 students from those schools provided intervention—U Steps (ES), U Steps (MS), and U Steps (HS). The Tier II intervention was a year-long clinical practicum provided by the UURC, funded by NCLB/ESSA but delivered at the school site.

Procedures:
From 2009 to 2017, students received instruction in U Steps sessions across grades 1-12. Each student was pretested in the fall and posttested in the spring. All students were required to attend instruction 2-3 times a week, for an average of 45 minutes per session.

Analysis:
Criterion-referenced tests included passage reading, word attack, word recognition, and fluency. Non-referenced tests included automatic word reading (AWR), informal reading inventory (IRI), benchmarking fluency, and timed word reading.

RESULTS

The results of this study suggest that the U Steps intervention model contributes to robust gains in the reading skills of Tier I students. Consistent gains were documented across measures:

- time (14 years)
- developmental reading levels ("Learning About Print" to "Going for Fluency")
- socio-economic status
- achievement
- language development
- special education status
- schools
- instructor experience/verification (teacher/paraprofessional)
- assessment type/criteria (criterion-referenced and non-referenced reading)

The results of this study suggest that the intervention is effective at improving reading skills in grades 1 through 12.

CONCLUSIONS

Aggregated and annual data from 2003 to 2017 suggest that the Tier II intervention model under investigation has consistent and measurable efficacy in helping struggling readers in grades 1 through 12 improve their reading abilities.

REFERENCES (original studies)


