Examining Positive but Nondifferential Gains in Secondary Students’ Reading Comprehension: A Focus on Instructional Practices and Differential Benefit

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Purpose

Modular Curriculum Design

The intervention was designed to be implemented in ELA classes, 3 days per week (150 minutes) and used a modular design in which teachers integrated comprehension practices in narrative and informational text. Initial lessons were teacher-designed.

Research Questions

- Efficacy: What are the statistical and practical effects of knowledge-building and student regulated practices on 7th - 12th grade students’ reading comprehension?
- Fidelity of Implementation: What is the relationship between dimensions of fidelity of implementation (i.e., adherence, quality of instruction, and program differentiation) and reading comprehension?
- Differential Benefit: Do knowledge-building and student regulated practices differentially benefit subgroups of students with lower entry-level comprehension performance?

Design & Participants

- 17 teachers (12 ELA teachers, 5 Social Studies) across 12 schools
- 3 high schools
- 9th grade English language arts (ELA) classes

Results

- Pretest and Posttest Means and Standard Deviations for Reading Outcomes
- Statistical Analysis * Effect Sizes
- Fidelity Across Phases

Conclusions

- Efficacy: The intervention did not differentially increase secondary students’ reading achievement over typical practice.
- Pre/Post Change: Students in both conditions gained, on average 4 points on Gates, mean change from the 32nd to the 42nd percentile.
- Differential Response by Demographics: Intervention effect trends indicated students above the 15th percentile benefitted more than students below the 15th percentile.
- Implementation Fidelity: Fidelity was moderate and not related to student achievement.
- Plausible Explanations: Teachers “transferred” selected practices from intervention to typical practice resulting in a lack of treatment adherence.

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