Research Behind the EL Education Language Arts Curriculum and Professional Services

EL Education offers a comprehensive, standards-based K-5 Language Arts curriculum and high-quality Professional Services. Each combines the practices that form the foundation of EL Education's proven model[14] with the latest research in order to establish a foundation for students that will lead to college and career readiness.

Research Behind Our K-5 Language Arts Curriculum

Strong literacy skills are the cornerstones on which positive economic and health outcomes are built.[10] In addition, reading skills measured in elementary school are highly predictive of future academic outcomes.[11] Despite these findings, only 36 percent of students currently reach proficiency in reading by the fourth-grade.[16] Furthermore, gaps between strong and weak readers increase over time.[19]

EL Education's curriculum meets these challenges by addressing each of the five essential components of reading as defined by the National Reading Panel (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension)[13] as well as the three key ELA shifts outlined in the Common Core State Standards.

A large body of research has demonstrated that foundational skills such phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency affect reading comprehension.[13] Students receive explicit and systematic instruction through a structured phonics approach in the EL Education curriculum that is based on Dr. Linnea Ehri's four phases of reading and spelling development.[3] As students move through phases, their ability to automatically read familiar and unfamiliar words increases, improving fluency, the bridge between foundational skills and comprehension.[15] Fluency is taught through a number of effective instructional practices such as repeated reading and the use of decodable texts.[13]

Elementary school is a time when students move from learning to read to reading to learn, especially through increased exposure to informational text.[1] Students' content knowledge is critical to their ability to comprehend a text.[20] The EL Education curriculum combines a structured phonics program with content-based literacy, because this combination builds knowledge and reading skills simultaneously,[12] including for struggling students.[6] Further, vocabulary building is approached through deep engagement with content-based text and learning words from context.[9] Through this work, students become increasingly able to comprehend text that becomes more complex across the school year and grade levels. In addition, their ability to speak and write grounded in text evidence grows, an essential skill on the path to college and career readiness.[7]

The EL Education curriculum was developed from the ground up for students that require various types of differentiation, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. To this end, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework[8] was used to ensure that all materials and supports are accessible for all types of learners. Evidence-based scaffolds and various levels of support are present in each lesson to ensure all students are able to interact with complex grade-level text, because differentiation that provides an appropriate level of challenge is a major driver of learning gains.[18] English Language Learner needs are specifically targeted through supports that aid students in understanding and using complex language structures present in academic discourse.[21]

Importantly, the EL Education's curriculum infuses academic work with essential opportunities for students to "encounter, tinker, practice, choose, and contribute" through active and reflective activities that build character and social-emotional learning skills.[4]

Research Behind Our Professional Services Offerings

EL Education is aware that a high-quality curriculum is only the beginning of helping teachers and students improve their skills. With attention to proper implementation, effective education practices have a much higher chance of

producing intended results.[5]

Based on 23 years of work with schools, EL Education knows that leadership is a major driver of instructional improvement. Collaborations with EL Education begin with a strategic planning phase with school and district level leaders, something that has been found to be critical to developing and sustaining staff competencies and establishing a collaborative work environment.[16] Before and during initial implementation, factors that might affect success are identified and tracked in order to ensure reliable improvement in student outcomes and consistent use of new practices by staff.[5]

EL Education offers Professional Development for teachers that "seamlessly links curriculum, assessment, standards, and professional learning opportunities,"[2] an approach that ensures teachers are able to translate learning into student achievement gains. In addition, teacher coaching is sustained, intense, and focused on building capacity for effective instructional practices and improving student learning, all requirements for improving student achievement.[22]

Summary

EL Education's K-5 Language Arts curriculum and Professional Services offerings reflect the latest research in curriculum development, instructional practice, professional development, and implementation science in order to improve both student achievement and teacher practice.

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