

One Teacher at a Time: Supporting Teachers' Knowledge of the Science of Reading

Excerpted from Plain Talk about Literacy and Learning Conference, Margie Gillis, Ed.D.,
presented February 26, 2018*



The Accumulation of Knowledge through Practice

“Teaching is one of the most cognitively complex professions... there is still uncertainty as to what works in various schools in diverse communities with each unique group of

students... what makes teaching a profession is the continual inquiry, expansion of repertoire, and accumulation of knowledge through practice,” (Costa and Garmston, 2016). Since our establishment in 2009 and through our prior work at Haskins Laboratories, the Literacy How team has worked on many fronts to empower teaching excellence to ensure that every child learns to read by third grade.



Demonstrating the Success of Evidence-Based Instruction and Support in the Classroom

Two studies conducted at Haskins Laboratories—the Early Reading Success Initiative (ERSI) pilot, and Mastering Reading Instruction (MRIN)— translated the 2000 Connecticut Blueprint for Reading Achievement's recommendations into embedded professional development (PD), i.e., evidence-based literacy instruction with coaching. MRIN compared the outcomes of teachers who had benefited from in-class coaching (mentoring) with those who had not.

Overall, MRIN demonstrated that:

- PD programs were very successful at building teachers' knowledge, especially for the in-class mentor model.
- Significant correspondences were found between teachers' knowledge and teachers' implementation of research-based methods of instruction.
- The transfer to student learning took several years to show up.



Mentors Make a Significant Difference

Joyce and Showers (2002) established that coaching (e.g., participants receiving ongoing support and guidance when they return to the classroom) was the essential professional development element in driving implementation of newly found knowledge and skills—an increase from 60% (practice alone) to 95% (with coaching).

Literacy How coaching was recently shown to positively affect student outcomes in a large Connecticut school district:

- 23 teachers received Literacy How coaching and were observed using a literacy protocol.
- 418 students in the 23 teachers' classrooms were matched on grade, race, gender, special education status, and lunch status to 418 comparison students.
- A statistically significant difference was found between students in Literacy How coached classrooms ($m = 105.0$, $sd = 14.73$) and comparison students ($m = 100.9$, sd

= 14.97), with an effect size of $d = .28$.



The Anne E. Fowler Literacy Fellowship at Fairfield University: Positive Impact at the Junction of Research, Policy & Partnership

In 2015, Margie Gillis furthered her vision of providing teacher knowledge and mentor-supported practice, by establishing the Anne E. Fowler Foundation to fund Fellows in the Reading and Language

Development Program at Fairfield University. The program and fellowship are specifically designed to help improve literacy rates among underachieving students in Connecticut and will provide teachers with *coursework and field practica* leading to:

- #102 Remedial Reading and Remedial Language Arts Certification (24 Credits)
- MA in Remedial Reading and Remedial Language Arts with #102 Certification Option (30 Credits)
- Sixth Year Certificate in Remedial Reading and Remedial Language Arts with #102 Certification Option (36 Credits).

Coursework is aligned with International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and International Literacy Association (ILA) standards. Fairfield University's 6th Year Professional Certificate is accredited by the International Dyslexia Association.

To learn more, contact Stephney Gonzalez, Fellowship Director, at sgonzalez@fairfield.edu.

*Click [here](#) to download the presentation.



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Our Mission is to EMPOWER TEACHERS to ensure that every child learns to read by third grade.

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