BACKGROUND

One objective of the Delaware State Improvement Grant (DelaSIG) is that teachers will implement scientifically based literacy/reading practices with an emphasis on struggling special education readers and improving special education students’ access to the general curriculum.

As part of the reporting of the DelaSIG, the Delaware Education Research and Development Center (R & D Center) requested survey data from participants who attended either one or both Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) professional development program(s) designed to help focus teacher instruction of struggling readers in Grades 4 through 12, Success for Secondary Struggling Readers (SSSR), and/or Implementing Multiple Practices for Activating Comprehension in Teaching (IMPACT). Each of these programs includes 30 hours of training in reading content knowledge, pedagogy, and application. An additional 60 hours of implementation are necessary to meet the requirements of a “cluster” (a 90-hour professional development program provided by the DDOE). A complete description of the content and requirements of the SSSR trainings and cluster can be found on the DDOE website at http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/reading_clusters.pdf. In addition, a complete description of the content and requirements of the IMPACT trainings and cluster can be found on the DDOE website at http://www.doe.k12.de.us/programs/reading/readingimpact.shtml.

Training for SSSR and IMPACT was provided through a Train the Trainer Model in five, six-hour modules. SSSR modules include: Assessment and Word Identification, Assessment and Fluency, Assessment and Vocabulary, Assessment and Comprehension, Motivation and Instructional Management, and DAR administration. IMPACT modules include: Word Identification and Fluency, Assessment for Teaching and Learning, Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Motivation and Instructional Design for Reading.

All identified 4-12th grade teachers who participated in the SSSR and/or IMPACT training(s) were asked to complete a brief on-line survey in order to collect their perceptions of the trainings. Ideally, as an outcome, teachers’ reading instruction for struggling readers would become more targeted and purposeful based on the trainings and
thus their perceptions of their knowledge and confidence in their teaching skills will increase.

**Purpose**

At the conclusion of the first training Institute, the End-of-Institute survey was mailed to each participant to capture his/her overall reactions to the module(s). In May 2005, 188 surveys were mailed of which sixty-two (62) were completed and returned to the R&D Center for analysis for a 33% rate of response. Again in 2007, for comparative purposes, at the conclusion of the training Institute(s), all identified participants were provided a web link to the End-of-Institute survey in order to capture their overall reactions to the module training(s). In May 2007, 72 SSSR and/or IMPACT participants were identified of which thirty-one (31) completed the survey for a 43% rate of response.

**Understanding the Need for Literacy Training**

Overall, 2007 respondents as compared to 2005 respondents reported an increase in their confidence level when it came to their ability to understand:

- *why reading is a national and state priority;* in 2007, almost three-quarters (71%) reported they were very confident while only 57% reported this confidence level in 2005;

- *why learning to read is difficult;* in 2007, almost three-quarters (74%) reported they were very confident while in 2005 only about half (49%) reported this level of confidence; and

- *the components of reading instruction that must be taught;* in 2007, the percentage grew to more than one-half (61%) from little more than one-third (36%).

**Alignment**

- Almost three-quarters of the participants (74%) indicated they strongly agree that SSSR and/or IMPACT professional development activities are aligned with their school’s mission, goals, and objectives.

- Less than one-half (48%) strongly agree that other professional development offered in their school/district aligns with what they learned during the SSSR and/or IMPACT modules.

**Administrator support**

- Most participants (70%) strongly agree their principals are supportive of the implementation of SSSR and/or IMPACT in their schools. This percentage dropped slightly from 2005 (73%).
All participants (100%) reported they believe they have achieved proficiency in vocabulary, comprehension, and instructional management as it relates to their current role in working with struggling readers to improve their reading skills.

Almost all participants indicated they achieved proficiency in motivation (97%), fluency (93%), and word identification (90%).

Module Participation

Respondents to this survey indicated a higher rate of attendance at the SSSR training(s) as compared to the IMPACT trainings. It may be that teachers are first attending the SSSR Institute (conceived as Institute I) and planning to attend the IMPACT Institute (Institute II) at a later time. However, because no information regarding the overall number of trainings was available at the time of this report, caution should be exercised when interpreting the attendance data.

Of those participants who responded to the 2007 End of Institute survey, most all attended every SSSR module training:

- Introduction (96%)
- Assessment and Word ID (100%)
- Assessment and Fluency (100%)
- Assessment and Vocabulary (96%)
- Assessment and Comprehension (100%)
- Motivation and Instructional Design Instructional Management (79%)
- Revised Motivation and Instructional Management (54%)

Of those participants who responded to the End of Institute survey, about one-half attended all the IMPACT module trainings:

- Introduction (48%)
- Assessment for Teaching and Learning (48%)
- Word ID and Fluency (52%)
- Vocabulary (48%)
- Comprehension (48%)
- Motivation and Instructional Design (52%)

Requests for More Information

Participants were asked to identify areas where they would like more information and/or more help with teaching struggling readers. While there was diversity in teachers’ responses, in 2005, one-fourth of the respondents (26%) indicated a need for additional professional development in the domain of student motivation; in 2007, participants requested more information regarding techniques to teach reading. For example, one respondent requested more information directed toward, “middle school word
identification methods (phonics).” Also, the 2007 participants wanted more information geared towards teaching specific strands of struggling readers such as English language learners or dyslexic students.

Further, in 2005, participants wanted more information to address the needs of their middle and high school students who were reading on elementary school grade levels, ways to improve instructional methods and finding resources for teachers and older students; in 2007, teachers voiced concerns about motivating struggling readers, addressing the needs of middle and high school students and increasing parental awareness of the importance of reading. A complete list of verbatim responses can be found in Appendix A.

**Requests for More Assistance**

Participants were also asked to identify areas where they would like more assistance with instructing struggling readers. In 2005, participants wanted more assistance with instructional methods, motivation techniques, lesson plans, and time management. This year’s participants wanted more help with instructional methods, the appropriate use of assessment tests, parental involvement, and online resources for students.

In addition, in 2005, some respondents (13%) indicated a need for more assistance in achieving a better match between the instructional level of the materials and the reading level of the student. One participant explained he/she would like assistance in “adapting literature books at the 7th & 8th grade level for readers at the 2nd grade-level of instruction.” Further, some teachers (11%) indicated they would like assistance with the logistics of classroom instruction. For example, one participant noted he/she would like assistance with “time management” and another participant indicated he/she would like “an example of a lesson plan to adapt to content areas across the board.” Many participants indicated unique, specific needs such as more assistance with “flexible grouping”, “support networks for teachers who incorporated SSSR into their instruction”, or “quick and easy strategies/tips that parents (non-educators) can use at home to increase skills for each module”.

In 2007, respondents also indicated unique, specific needs such as “help to get the word out” about the important role parents play, how to help students with dyslexia, differentiating lessons, etc. A complete listing of all responses can be found in Appendix A.
**Conclusion**

Most responses from the teachers remained consistent between 2005 and 2007. It may be that more time needs to pass and/or more training(s) need to be conducted in order for the manifestations of change in teacher’s perceptions to become apparent. Regardless, program developers may want to consider implementing follow up activities based on the participants’ requests for more information and more help in their endeavor to reach struggling readers.
References


**APPENDIX A: END OF THE INSTITUTE: OVERALL REACTIONS**

(2007 compared to 2005)

**SSSR AND/OR IMPACT**

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION**

Using the scale below, please indicate the degree to which you believe the SSSR and/or IMPACT modules have improved your ability to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability</th>
<th>Very Confident</th>
<th>Moderately Confident</th>
<th>Slightly Confident</th>
<th>Slightly Unsure</th>
<th>Moderately Unsure</th>
<th>Very Unsure</th>
<th>Skilled in this before attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand why reading is a national and state priority.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how good readers read.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how children learn to read.</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the components of instruction that must be taught.</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand why learning to read is difficult.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
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<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the scale below, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My understanding of the scientifically based reading research was enhanced.</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSSR and/or IMPACT professional development activities are aligned with my school’s mission, goals, and objectives.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in my school have access to reading instructional support when implementation problems are encountered.</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reading professional development offered in my school/district aligns with what I have learned during these modules.</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My principal is supportive of the implementation of SSSR and/or IMPACT in my school.</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please indicate if you believe you have achieved proficiency in the following areas as it relates to your current role in working with struggling readers to improve their reading skills (2007 responses only):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Not at All Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Identification</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Management</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In regards to struggling readers, I would like more information about:**

“Research on the successes with implementing reading programs at the high school level, especially with students diagnosed with having learning disabilities – i.e., what programs work best? how are the lessons structured (direct instruction, setting, intensity of, etc.)”

“How to help students with dyslexia”

“Middle school word identification methods (phonics)”

“Reading techniques in the content areas.”
“Even though I thought I did a good job with teaching fluency in a Computer Software Application Class, I would love to have more information on teaching fluency in a technical area.”

“How to help them in a class of mixed abilities”

“providing interesting reading material to high school students with low reading scores”

“How to improve student short answer extended response answers.”

“How to help ELL students with all the reading skills listed above: fluency, word i.d. etc.”

“Word Identification--a comprehensive system to implement instruction so that my students could improve in their decoding and fluency”

“comprehension”

“How to specifically help ESL struggling readers”

“none”

“how to achieve motivation and maintain the motivation. How to get the parents on board to agree that reading is important for their children.”

**In regards to struggling readers, I would like more help with:**

“Nothing. I am well-versed in the strategies that can be used to assist students in improving their reading abilities.”

“Getting the word out as to how important a role the parent/guardian plays at home in reinforcing the skills I am teaching in the classroom. I want the parents to make the students read also.”
“incorporating strategies into my lesson plans in the future, lesson plans that are already written and now need to be modified.”

“How to help students with dyslexia”

“Middle school word identification methods (phonics)”

“Getting them to want to read to improve their comprehension and inferencing skills”

“How to improve student short answer extended response answers.”

“How often should I give assessment tests to my struggling readers and what are the best tools to be using.”

“same as above (i.e. Word Identification--a comprehensive system to implement instruction so that my students could improve in their decoding and fluency)”

“convincing regular education teachers to be willing to differentiate instruction without being so worried about what is fair to everyone”

“fluency”

“none”

“Online resources that students can go to independently and reinforce skills needed. Also, to have the ok to do.”

“centers, literacy circles, challenge work to differentiate lessons”