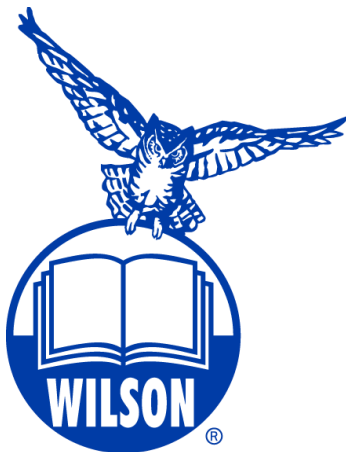


Wilson® Utilizes PDSA Process to Study Ready to Rise® Implementation in Portland Public Schools



Learning gaps in foundational skills grew tremendously during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wilson Language Training (WLT) tackled this need by developing a summer accelerated learning program called Foundations® Ready to Rise® for rising first and second graders. The program’s approach aligned with key tenets of an acceleration program described by WLT Co-Founder Barbara Wilson and Dr. David Steiner, executive director of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy and professor of education at John Hopkins University. In their 2021 article, [Steiner & Wilson: Case Study — Some Tough Questions, and Some Answers, About Fighting COVID Slide While Accelerating Student Learning](#), they explain that acceleration programs should:

- identify a small number of key skills and core knowledge essential for the next school year’s success;
- focus on the mastery of those key skills; and
- assess students to determine progress toward that mastery.

After designing the Foundations® Ready to Rise® program, we set out to understand its implementation and impact on students and teachers by engaging in a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle during the summer of 2022.

Partnering with Portland Public Schools (PPS) in Portland, Oregon, we provided professional learning support to teachers as they rolled out the program, facilitated target coaching at four neighborhood schools, analyzed pre and posttest assessment data among participants, and collected teacher feedback via surveys and focus groups.

Background

PPS enrolled over 3,400 students in its Summer Acceleration Academy, a four-week (20-day) intensive education program designed to prepare students for the next grade level—specifically learners whose learning was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and who exhibited significant learning gaps. The program focused on a number of areas, and Ready to Rise was implemented in the ELA component for over 1,200 rising first and second grade students.

Some teachers taking part in the study were familiar with the basic concepts of Ready to Rise because they had implemented Foundations, the program on which Ready to Rise is based, starting in 2019. Other teachers were new to Foundations due to summer school hiring following the pandemic.

What is the Foundations® Ready to Rise® program?

Foundations® Ready to Rise® is designed to help teachers accelerate student learning by targeting a small number of key foundational literacy skills necessary for the next school year’s success. The program focuses on the mastery of those skills and assesses students to determine their progress toward mastery. Learn more here:

<https://www.wilsonlanguage.com/pr ograms/foundations/ready-to-rise/>

Study Design

Wilson studied the implementation and impact of the program using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) framework, a formal way to test a new or revised program, determine its strengths and problem areas, and understand its overall effectiveness.

Participating teachers were offered professional learning through two virtual Ready to Rise Program Workshops. These workshops reviewed the Ready to Rise program schedule, activities, and day-by-day Teacher Guide, which contains detailed instructions for successful program delivery. Participants also were sent classroom and teacher materials.

Data from the Ready to Rise assessment tool was collected at the beginning and end of the study from four schools where Wilson's professional learning support was concentrated. Teachers in these four schools were administered pre- and post-implementation surveys and were invited to join a focus group to provide feedback on the program.

What is the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) framework?

- **Plan** - Identify objectives, predict outcomes, arrange the logistics of the plan, decide how to collect data.
- **Do** - Carry out the plan, document all observations, record data.
- **Study** - Analyze data, compare results to predictions, summarize what you learned.
- **Act** - Identify what worked, what didn't, and what needs to change. If necessary, begin the cycle again, making changes.

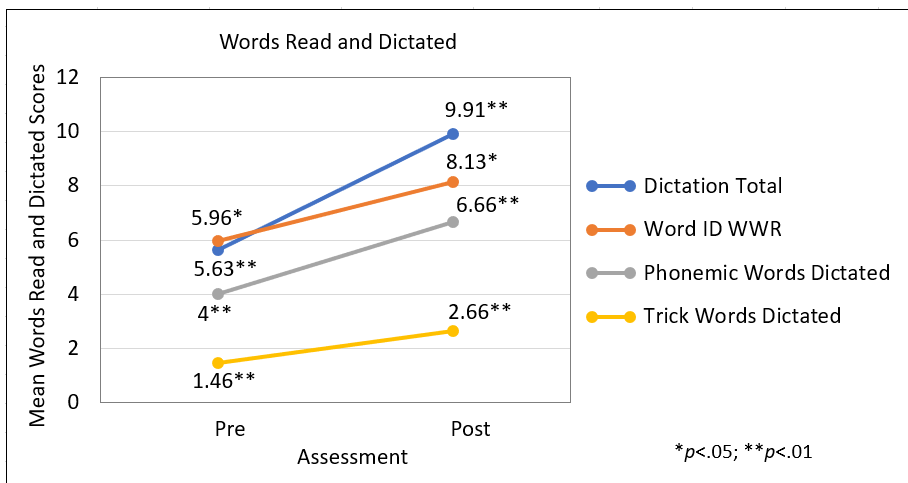
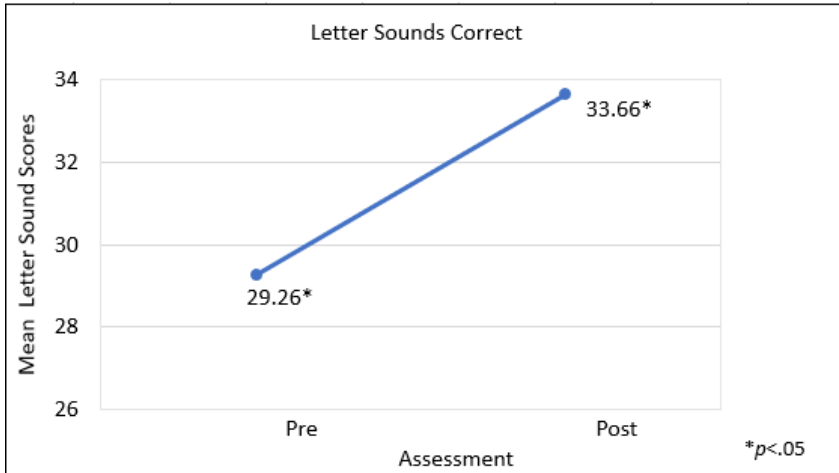
Key Findings

Pre and posttest assessment data from five first grade classrooms and four second grade classrooms were collected from the four schools.

Students who attended 15 or more days of the Summer Acceleration Academy made statistically significant gains across several key measures.

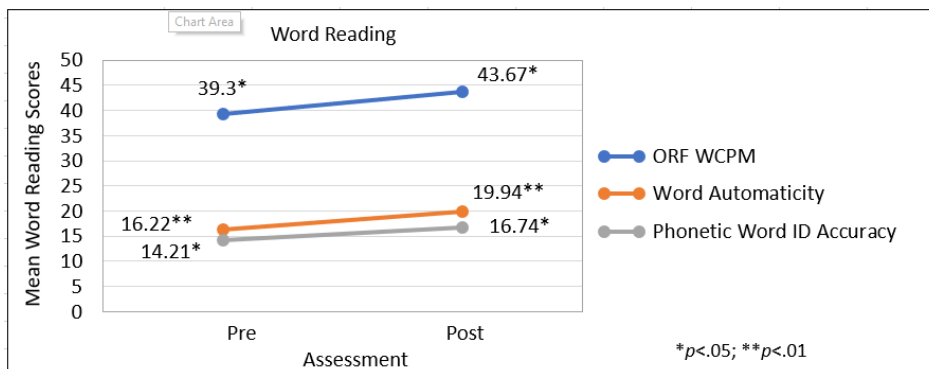
Grade 1 Growth

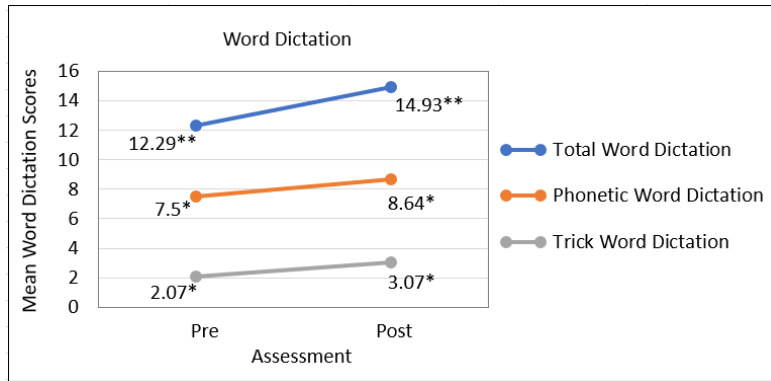
- Letter Sounds growth of 15%
- Word ID/Whole Words Read (WWR) growth of 36%
- Phonemic Words Dictated growth of 67%
- Trick Words Dictated growth of 82%
- Dictation Total growth of 76%



Grade 2 Growth

- Oral Reading Fluency/Word Count Per Minute growth of 11%
- Word Automaticity growth of 23%
- Phonetic Words ID Accuracy growth of 18%
- Phonic Words Dictation growth of 15%
- Trick Words Dictation growth of 48%
- Total Dictation growth of 22%





Growth Across Populations

- Students identified as economically disadvantaged, utilizing special education services, and minorities showed statistically significant gains between the pre and posttest assessments.
- Students identified as English learners (ELs) had significant gains when compared to their peers who were native English speakers.

The evidence reviewed in this study and improvement on the program assessment show that Ready to Rise® implementation is associated with substantial student growth in foundational literacy skills taught in Foundations.

In addition:

- Teachers reported that students who had Foundations® as part of their classroom curriculum participated more readily and were more engaged throughout the Summer Acceleration Academy.
- Teachers reported that delivering accelerated lessons that pre-identified key skills supported their implementation and alignment to the Ready to Rise® program.

“The students who were part of our program in the summer saw incredible gains in their foundational skills and early reading skills,” said PPS Director of Learning Acceleration Darcy Soto. “Teachers and parents saw lots of great impacts, including increased fluency and increased interest in reading. They were selecting more and more complex texts and showing more confidence in their reading skills.”

Implementation Takeaways

After analyzing the data, WLT researchers came away with these important takeaways:

Regular attendance is key for the retention of new skills. We’ve heard it said before: *practice, practice, practice*. Students who routinely attended the Summer Acceleration Academy (15 days or more out of 20 days) experienced the greatest gains in literacy skills because they had more opportunities to practice and apply their new skills. Those who attended fewer than 15 days of lessons didn’t make as many gains.

Scheduling is key to implementation with fidelity. Ready to Rise is designed to be delivered in 90-minute sessions; thirty minutes are devoted to word study, transcription components, and application and fluency components, respectively. Due to scheduling logistics, PPS was only able to schedule 60-minute blocks. Teachers implementing Ready to Rise spent 30 minutes on word study every day and alternated between transcription and fluency for the second half of the period. Students' literacy skills improved during the study, but their word study skills improved the most due to daily instruction.

Consistent assessment is key to tracking student progress. Pre and posttest assessments help schools track and support students' progress. Summative and formative assessments allow teachers to tailor the learning experience to target students' trouble areas. The data set used in this study relied on the results of formative testing before and after the implementation of Ready to Rise.

Professional learning is crucial to successful Ready to Rise implementation. Effective instruction requires teachers to be familiar with both the curriculum and classroom methods and practices. As a result, the virtual Ready to Rise Program Workshops were essential for instructors new to the program. PPS did an excellent job ensuring that participants attended the virtual training.

Involvement of administration aids the success of Ready to Rise. The PPS study reinforced the idea that administrators who help onboard and participate in a new program or curriculum make it easier for teachers to follow the program with fidelity. Specifically, when administrators participate in training with their teachers, they have a better idea of what implementation should look like. Administrator presence also helps teachers feel supported and trust that school leaders see value in the change that's underway. Moreover, administrators can ensure that teachers have the tools and support they need to teach effectively. They're also able to make sure that assessment data is used in a way that ensures the continuation of classroom instruction and support services.

Foundations and Ready to Rise are a "dynamic duo" of literacy instruction. Students who previously had Foundations as part of their classroom curriculum during the school year participated more readily and were more engaged throughout the Summer Acceleration Academy. Teachers also reported that having accelerated lessons that highlight key skills helped them implement and adhere to the Ready to Rise program.

For more information about WLT's acceleration program, visit the [Ready to Rise page](#) of our website.