

Allegheny County Schools Cradle to Career (C2C) Literacy Project

U.S. Department of Education

Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) Program Grant

(PR/Award # S215G140012)

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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MN Associates, Inc.

www.mnassociatesinc.com

COMPLETED BY:

Kavita Mittapalli, Ph.D.

Nina de las Alas



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“I have acquired many strategies and techniques that have helped me teach kindergarten [in] the past year and a half. Planning is easier and I feel confident with lessons because of App State's teachers and their guidance.”

“I have learned a lot of good strategies during these classes and been reminded of strategies that I had forgotten.”

“I have learned many things in these courses that have had a huge impact on my students!”

“This is my 25th year teaching, and I continually enjoy learning and wish to continue with more literacy instruction and strategy development for my students. I truly believe students experience greater success when they know we are sincerely invested in their education.”

Executive Summary

In 2014, Alleghany County Schools (ACS) applied for and was awarded a two-year Innovative Approaches To Literacy (IAL) grant (PR/Award # S215G140012) by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to launch a project that would help transform the literacy skills and English language arts (ELA) abilities of its young citizens. The Cradle to Career (C2C) project was designed to serve about 1,750 students enrolled in ACS four schools (Glade Creek Elementary, Piney Creek Elementary, Sparta Elementary, and Alleghany High) and children ages 0-5 throughout the community. The project was designed to expand the county’s vision of education from kindergarten to grade 12 to birth through postsecondary and workforce success. To accomplish this, the C2C project—through its activities and grant funding—was to provide a comprehensive program of services that aligned with the North Carolina Statewide Literacy Plan¹ and to begin operationalizing the plan in Alleghany County.

The C2C project had four main goals:

- 1) children would arrive ready for school.
- 2) students would perform at or above grade level.
- 3) parents would be actively involved in literacy activities.
- 4) the school district would build its capacity to address the literacy needs of its children.

The implementation of the C2C project had a rough start. Delays precipitated by a high number and rapid turnover of project and school district leadership—coupled with underlying difficulties working in a high-poverty, high- needs rural county—threatened to derail the project. However, new C2C project staff members worked with USDE and were able refocus and redirect its attention to more a more streamlined menu of C2C activities.

The following table showed which activities were implemented, were implemented with some modification, and were not implemented.

C2C Project Activities by Implementation Status

| Activity | Implementation status | Additional information/rationale |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Parents As Teachers | Not implemented | Lack of a volunteer for parent educator |
| Read It Once Again (RIOA) | Implemented as planned in year 1 | Completed in year 1 |

¹ See <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/sbe-archives/meetings/2012/05/gcs/05gcs01attach01.pdf>

| Activity | Implementation status | Additional information/rationale |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| E-Reader Loan Program | Implemented as planned | Completed in year 1 |
| Book Distribution | Implemented with modification | Completed in years 1 and 2, conducted annually |
| Letterland Phonics and Write from The Beginning and Beyond (WFBB) | Implemented as a modification | Letterland – completed in years 1 and 2, with train the trainer and teacher training; WFBB – delayed until SY 2017-18, after grant period |
| Differentiated instruction | Implemented as planned | Two professional development courses of action were taken: 1) reading specialist program (an M.A. degree) and 2) high school literature lesson plan workshop |
| Summer Literacy Camps and Extended Learning Opportunities | Implemented as planned | Completed in years 1 and 2 |
| Extended Library Hours and Saturday Academics | Not implemented | Lack of student interest |

C2C activities that did well were those that were implemented to their expected completion. These included activities that provided material directly or indirectly to students such as the book distribution, summer camps, and Letterland Phonics curriculum, and also activities involving training of teachers through the Alleghany Literacy Project and the Appalachian State University master’s program in reading education.

C2C project contributed to improving literacy among the k-12 students in Alleghany County Schools in at least three ways. One way was through purchase and distribution of resources that went directly to students, such as the book distribution during literacy family nights, new books that were purchased for the school and classroom libraries of C2C participating teachers and the e-readers in Alleghany County Library. A second way was through the purchase of curriculum programs: RIOA, Letterland Phonics And WFBB. A third way was at the golden intersection of instruction, content and learner. At this junction, C2C facilitated professional development training and literacy strategies affected teacher instructional practices. Teachers who took part in the Alleghany Literacy Project and the reading education program reported gains in knowledge, skills and dispositions.

To sustain these gains and to continue to build capacity for literacy in the county, the following recommendations are offered:

- Set aside professional development training days to convene as a community of practice (COP) teachers who participated in the Alleghany Literacy Project and the reading education program.

- Build upon the existing collaboration in the schools to develop professional learning communities (PLCs) on literacy in each school.
- Build an integrated system of supports from birth through grade 2.
- Investigate and pursue new program funding sources and partnerships to build instructional capacity.
- Work closely with researchers and evaluators in the future to design a realistic data collection system to better link project activities, measures, outputs and outcomes.

Introduction

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) awarded Allegheny County Schools (ACS) a two-year Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant (PR/Award # S215G140012) to fund a project that would help transform the literacy skills and English language arts (ELA) abilities of students in the community. The Cradle to Career (C2C) project was designed to serve about 1,750 K-12 students enrolled in the school system and children ages 0-5 and their parents throughout the community by expanding the county's vision of education from birth and early childhood, through grade school, to postsecondary and workforce success. Moreover, the project was designed to provide a comprehensive program of services that aligned with the North Carolina Statewide Literacy Plan that would begin to operationalize that plan.

The C2C project had four main goals:

1. Children would arrive ready for school.
2. Students would perform at or above grade level.
3. Parents would be actively involved in literacy activities.
4. The school district would build its capacity to address the literacy needs of its children.

To meet these goals the C2C project's work was set in all four schools in the county—Glade

C2C Project at A Glance Activities by Site

Glade Creek Elementary, Piney Creek Elementary, and Sparta Elementary:

- Book Distribution
- Letterland Phonics
- Write from the Beginning and Beyond (WFBB)
- Differentiated Instruction: Reading Education Program
- Summer Camp
- Extended Learning Opportunities: 1 on 1 Tutoring

Allegheny High School:

- Write from the Beginning and Beyond (WFBB)
- Differentiated Instruction: Reading Education Program
- Differentiated Instruction: Allegheny Literacy Project

Allegheny County Library

- Read It Once Again (RIOA)
- E Reader Loan Program

Creek Elementary School, Piney Creek Elementary School, Sparta Elementary School and Allegheny High School—and in Allegheny County Library. ACS also contracted faculty and staff from Appalachian State University (App State) and Duquesne University (DU) to provide professional development and training to ACS teachers in order to deepen their understanding and application of content pedagogy and improve their instructional practices in literacy. In addition, ACS leveraged its relationships with the Allegheny Partnership for Children, United Methodist Reading Revival, Allegheny Arts Guild, App State University and the Allegheny Public School Partnership to actively assist and support ACS in seeing the C2C activities come to fruition. Table 1 below summarizes the goals, activities, the key partners or players in the activities, the target audiences of the activities and the short-term measurable objectives that the C2C project endeavors to meet by the end of the grant period.

Table 1: C2C Project Design by Goal, Activity, Target Audience, Short-Term and Long-Term Objectives

| Activity | Target Audience | Key Staff or Partner | Short Term Objective | Goal |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | 1: Children will arrive ready for school. 2: Students will perform at or above grade level. 3: Parents will be actively involved in literacy activities. 4: The school district will build its capacity to address the literacy needs of its children. |
| Parents as Teachers (includes recruitment, training) | Parents with children birth to age 5 | Parent Coordinator, Allegheny County Library | Percentage of 4 year-old children participating in the program who achieve significant gains in oral language skills will improve by 10% | Goals 1 & 3 |
| Read it Once Again (RIOA) (includes material purchases, training) | Parents with children, birth to age 5 | Allegheny County Library, local daycare centers | Percentage of parents who engage in literacy activities offered by the program will increase by 70% | Goals 1 & 3 |
| Book Distribution | Parents with children, birth to age 5, school age children K-12 | C2C Staff, Parent Coordinator, | Percentage of 4 year-old children participating in the program who achieve significant gains in oral language skills will improve by 10% participating grade 3 and 8 students on state reading assessment by 10%, and 85% of high school students at or above grade level on state ELA assessments | Goals 1, 2 & 3 |
| Differentiated instruction (for remediation and acceleration) | K-12 teachers | C2C Staff, App State, DU | Percentage of participating grade 3 students who meet or exceed proficiency on state reading assessment will increase by 10%, grade 8 students by 10%, and 85% of high school students performing at or above level on state ELA assessments | Goals 2 & 4 |
| E-Reader Loan Program | Parents of children and youth | C2C Staff, Allegheny County | The percentage of parents who engage in literacy-related activities offered by the program will increase | Goals 2 & 3 |

| Activity | Target Audience | Key Staff or Partner | Short Term Objective | Goal |
|--|--|--------------------------|--|---|
| | | | | 1: Children will arrive ready for school. 2: Students will perform at or above grade level. 3: Parents will be actively involved in literacy activities. 4: The school district will build its capacity to address the literacy needs of its children. |
| | | Library, daycare centers | by 70% | |
| Expanded Learning Opportunities | Students grade K through 12, Grade K-12 teachers | C2C Staff, consultants | Percentage of participating grade 3 students who meet or exceed proficiency on state reading assessment will increase by 10%, grade 8 students by 10%, and 85% of high school students performing at or above level on state ELA assessments | Goals 2 & 4 |
| Summer Literacy Camps | K-12 Students, Participating Teachers | C2C Staff, Consultants | The percentage of parents who engage in literacy-related activities offered by the program will increase by 70% | Goal 2 |
| Saturday Academies | K-12 Students, Participating Teachers | C2C Staff, Consultants | Percentage of participating grade 3 students who meet or exceed proficiency on state reading assessment will increase by 10%, grade 8 students by 10%, and 85% of high school students performing at or above level on state ELA assessments | Goal 2 |
| Model Classroom | K-12 Students, Participating Teachers | C2C Staff, Consultants | Percentage of participating grade 3 students who meet or exceed proficiency on state reading assessment will increase by 10%, grade 8 students by 10%, and 85% of high school students performing at or above level on state ELA assessments | Goals 2 & 4 |

About the Evaluation

The Alleghany County Public Schools contracted MN Associates, Inc. (MNA), a Virginia-based PreK-16 consulting firm to conduct the evaluation study of the C2C project in 2015. The evaluation design for the project involved both a formative analysis (formative evaluation) to provide performance feedback and permit regular assessment and necessary adjustments and a summative analysis (summative evaluation) regarding the impact of the program on achieving the intended outcomes of the project. The evaluation procedures used in the study were designed to report on the progress the project was making towards its goals and benchmarks. In particular, the evaluation study was design to provide insights to the following research questions:

1. To what extent did the implementation of C2C project activities occurring as planned?
2. What aspects of the C2C project worked well?
3. What issues presented hurdles to C2C’s successful implementation?
4. What were the areas of improvement for the C2C project?
5. How had the C2C project contributed to improving literacy among the K-12 students in Alleghany County Public Schools?
6. What were the perceived impacts of the C2C project?

This is the final evaluation report for the C2C project. Therefore, this report will address all the research questions noted above by examining what transpired in Year 2 of the project, reviewing what happened in both years of the project, and addressing what perceived impacts the project had on the PreK-12 students, their families, and their teachers. Table 2 presents a crosswalk of the project activities with the data collection sources and analysis for the evaluation. C2C activities in *italics* were not implemented.² The research questions cuts across all the activities as they apply. More information about the evaluation study is in the Appendix.

Table 2: Crosswalk of C2C Activities, Data Sources and Data Analysis

| C2C Activity | Data Collection Source(s) | Data Analysis |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Parents as Teachers</i> | <i>Attendance records; meeting agendas and notes; ACA correspondence; other extant documents</i> | <i>Qualitative descriptive, thematic analysis</i> |
| Read It Once Again (RIOA) | Purchase orders; training records; library records of check-ins/check-outs; ACS correspondence | Qualitative descriptive, thematic analysis |
| E-Reader Loan Program | Purchase orders; library records of check-ins/check-outs; parent e-reader loan agreements; ACS | Qualitative descriptive, thematic analysis |

² Further explanation is provided under the Implementation Evaluation section of this report.

| C2C Activity | Data Collection Source(s) | Data Analysis |
|---|--|--|
| | correspondence | |
| Book Distribution | Event agendas or announcements; purchase orders; attendance records; ACS correspondence | Qualitative descriptive, thematic analysis |
| Letterland Phonics and Write from the Beginning and Beyond | Purchase orders; ACS correspondence; surveys, interviews; focus group discussions | Qualitative descriptive, thematic analysis; descriptive statistics |
| Differentiated Instruction: Allegheny Literacy Project and Reading Education Program | Lesson plans; sample student work, teacher reflections; surveys; focus group discussions; blog posts; program course of study; academic record; student assessment results; ACS correspondence; syllabus; other extant documents | Qualitative descriptive, thematic analysis; descriptive statistics |
| Summer Literacy Camps and Extended Learning Opportunities | Camp schedule of activities; student enrollment; tutoring case reports; Morris IRI results; ACS correspondence; other extant documents | Qualitative descriptive, thematic analysis; descriptive statistics |
| <i>Extended Library Hours and Saturday Academies</i> | <i>Student enrollment; schedule of activities</i> | <i>Qualitative descriptive, thematic analysis</i> |
| <i>Model Classroom</i> | <i>Student enrollment; sample lesson plans; ACS correspondence</i> | <i>Qualitative descriptive, thematic analysis</i> |

About This Report

This report covers the implementation period of the C2C project from April 2016 through August 2017. The report discusses findings from field reports and existing data from the various C2C activities. These included: surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions by teachers participating in the reading specialist licensure training. The report is separated into two sections: implementation evaluation and impact evaluation. Evaluation questions 1 through 4 are addressed under the implementation evaluation section. Questions 5 and 6 are addressed under the impact evaluation section. The report concludes with recommendations and an appendix.

Due to the nature of the data that were eventually collected, results reported are descriptive and suggestive. No correlation or causal relationship may be interpreted from them. Quantitative data are reported in aggregate and anonymized. Quotes cited are selected for illustrative examples only. Every effort has been made to protect individuals, particularly students' identities. Where faces are clearly seen, pictures were sourced from a publicly available website and individuals were cited.

IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION

Evaluation Question 1: To what extent is the implementation of C2C project activities occurring as planned?

As noted in the interim report³, during its first year of implementation the C2C experienced several setbacks that affected implementation of the project. These setbacks include high turnover of key project and school district leadership, delayed implementation (including delayed evaluation of the grant project), and a lack of implementation progress. The lack of implementation progress triggered a USDE review that precipitated both an overall budget reduction as well as a reallocation of resources, which in turn cascaded into a more streamlined roster of project activities. Table 3 presents the list of activities, their implementation status in Years 1 and 2 and additional information. A no cost extension also allowed for the completion of the activities through July 2017.

Table 3: Implementation Status of C2C Project Activities

| Activity | Implementation Status | Additional Information/Rationale |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| Parents as Teachers | Not implemented | Lack of a volunteer for parent educator |
| Read It Once Again (RIOA) | Implemented as planned in Year 1 | Completed in Year 1 |
| E-Reader Loan Program | Implemented as planned | Completed in Year 1 |
| Book Distribution | Implemented with modification | Completed in Years 1 and 2, conducted annually |
| Letterland Phonics and Write from the Beginning and Beyond | Implemented as a modification | Letterland – Completed in Years 1 and 2, with train the trainer and teacher training; WFBB – delayed until SY 2017-18, after grant period |
| Differentiated Instruction | Implemented as planned | Two professional development courses of action were taken: 1) reading specialist program (an M.A. degree) and 2) high school literature lesson plan workshop |

³ See Mittapalli, K., & de las Alas, N. (2016, April). Interim external evaluation report. Alleghany County Schools Cradle to Career (C2C) Literacy project. Innovated Approaches to Literacy (IAL) Program Grant. Fairfax, VA: MN Associates, Inc.

| Activity | Implementation Status | Additional Information/Rationale |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Summer Literacy Camps and Extended Learning Opportunities | Implemented as planned | Completed in Years 1 and 2 |
| Extended Library Hours and Saturday Academies | Not implemented | Lack of student interest |
| Model Classroom | Not implemented | Lack of teachers volunteering their classrooms for demonstrations |

Parents as Teachers, Model Classroom, Extended Library Hours, and Saturday Academies

The four named activities did not take pace. Leadership turnover, lack of interest, and subsequent budget reduction and reallocation of resources imposed by USDE led to these activities to be dropped from the project.

Read It Once Again (RIOA) Curriculum and E-Reader Loan Program

In Year 1, the project staff oversaw the purchase, licensing and distribution of the RIOA curriculum. The curriculum covers the basic foundational skills of learning that are essential for preparing a child to be school ready. These foundational skills include physical development and daily living skills, cognitive skills, early literacy skills, and spatial-conceptual thinking. The RIOA curriculum materials include instructional guides, assessments, and student resources. The RIOA curriculum has been housed at the Alleghany County Library for early childhood providers and parents of preschool children to use.

In tandem, the C2C staff also purchased six Kindle Paperwhite e-reader tablets and portable whiteboards. These electronic gadgets are available for early childhood providers to checkout from the library.

For both the RIOA curriculum and the e-readers, there were no additional activities that occurred in Year 2 beyond continuing to make these resources available through the library.

Letterland Phonics and Think Maps’ Write from the Beginning and Beyond

The budget reduction and reallocation of remaining funds provided sufficient dollars for the purchase, licensing and distribution of the Letterland Phonics Program to all three K-8 schools in the county: Glade Creek, Piney Creek, and Sparta. Letterland Phonics is a program that combines letters to their sounds so that the letter Z look like a zebra, and the letter A is in the shape of an apple. The character, sound and a

word beginning with the letter identifiably linked together to provide phonemic awareness and understanding of the fundamental building blocks for literacy. In Year 1, C2C program staff purchased Letterland Phonics materials for Glade Creek, Piney Creek and Sparta elementary schools and secured licensed Letterland trainers to provide professional development for the schools teachers. In Year 2 more training occurred along with fidelity checks to ensure that the trained teachers were correctly implementing the program. In addition, the C2C grant funds provided for an ACS instructional coach to receive Train-the-Trainer Letterland training. This would enable ACS teachers to receive the support of a certified Letterland trainer after the C2C grant funding ends.

Along with Letterland Phonics, C2C afforded the purchase of a writing curriculum with a corresponding teacher training to be implemented district-wide. Write from the Beginning and Beyond (WFBB) from Thinking Maps is a

K-8 comprehensive, systemically structured, writing curriculum designed to assist educators and students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for age-appropriate and domain-specific writing achievement. Each of the domains of writing utilizes a combination of modeling, analytic rubrics, and mini-lessons that focus on the essential elements of effective writing (Write from the Beginning and Beyond website, n.d.).

The curriculum was intended to be implemented in SY 2016-17. However it was postponed until the beginning of SY2017-18 to provide sufficient time to full implementation with training, a full school year of 167 days. Teacher training began at the start of the school year as part of the teacher professional days. Fidelity checks by WFBB-certified trainers occurred in October and full roll out are scheduled for January 9, 2018 for grades K-5 and January 10 for grades 6-8.

Book Distribution Program

The book distribution program had become a popular means of providing high-quality books to the students enrolled in ACS. The book distributions were timed to coincide with family literacy nights held at the Glade Creek, Piney Creek and Sparta Elementary schools. Family literacy nights encouraged parents or students' legal guardians to support their students' reading skills and to cultivate a love for lifelong reading. At the events faculty and staff facilitated learning among parents/guardians and students and offered advice and assistance to parents/guardians on strategies to support their students' literacy skills at home. Teachers discovered that parents (or grandparents who were the students' main caretakers and guardians) struggled with reading too or did not know how to support their students'. During family literacy nights, open houses, and parent-teacher conferences, teachers explained the learning objectives for their students and how parents can do certain practices parents at home to reinforce what students are doing in school. In addition, teachers

shared information about literacy resources available outside of school. For example, teachers told parents about the availability of e-readers with age/grade appropriate resources that are available in the Allegheny County Library. They also shared book collections and book titles, and age-appropriate literature that the students can check out at the library. In addition, teachers informed parents about community programs that provide free books to their students, such those from Imagination Library⁴ which were designed to encourage early childhood literacy from birth to five.

Table 4 summarizes the book distribution program family literacy nights. Figure 1 provides pictures taken from Piney Creek’s family literacy night.

Table 4: Family Literacy Nights at ACS Elementary Schools

| School | Year 1 | Year 2 |
|-------------|---|---|
| | 625 PreK-4 students served and 421 parents participating | 582 PreK-4 students served and 586 parents participating |
| Glade Creek | Camp Read A-Lot: The school set up with reading tents and rotating reading stations that mimic summer camp with teachers dressed as camp counselors | Out of This World Readers: Space-themed literacy night |
| Piney Creek | The Story on How to Support Your Reader: Teachers and students got into character attired in their favorite storybook characters. | The Story: Each classroom was decorated based on a famous children’s book. For example, one classroom was based on Dr. Seuss’s book <i>Green eggs and Ham</i> , while another classroom was based Eric Carle’s <i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i> |
| Sparta | Lights, Camera, READ: The school put on a movie-themed literacy night | Lights, Action, READ: Movie-themed literacy night |

⁴ See <https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/affiliate/NCALLEGHANY/>

Figure 1: Pictures from Piney Creek Elementary School's 2017 Family Literacy Night: The Story



Book Read

Book Reads were designed to engage high school students as well as the community at large into literature and topics set in their community. In Year 1 the C2C project helped support a county-wide reading project based on the Appalachian novel *Walking Across Egypt* by Clyde Edgerton. The C2C Project support included an author's talk event and a play produced by students from Allegheny High School based on the novel. In Year 2, the C2C project supported another author's talk event. This time, the novel *One Second After* by William Forstchen was the focus. Dr. Forstchen is a noted history professor and writer based in Montreat College near Asheville, NC. The novel, the first in the John Matherson trilogy series, recounts the effects and consequences of an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack across the United States and the protagonist's

community in a small Appalachian town. Shown in the media flyer and clipping below, Dr. Forstchen met with ELA students at Allegheny High School in March 2017, to discuss the novel. The students were reading the series as part of their studies.

Figure 2: Media Flyer Announced Book Read Author Talk Event featuring *One Second After* Author William Forstchen

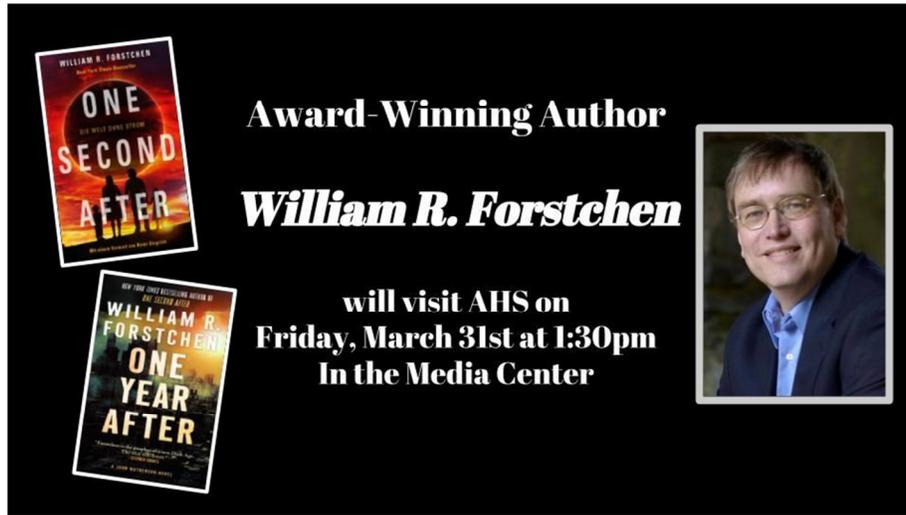
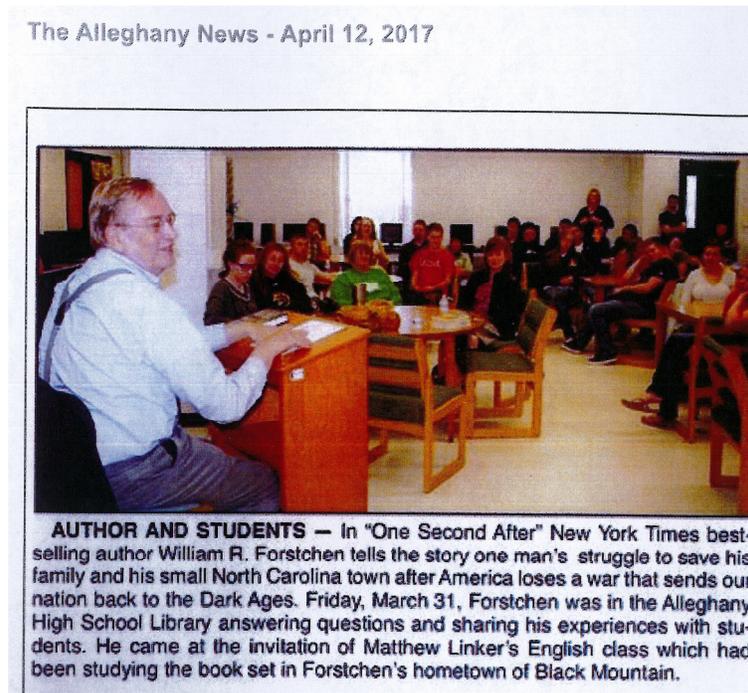


Figure 3: Noted Author William Forstchen Discussed *One Second After* with AHS English Students



Summer Literacy Camp and Extended Learning Opportunities

The C2C Project also supported summer literacy camps for students in grades 1 through 3 who were identified as at-risk for falling behind in their reading abilities. In Year 2 a summer literacy camp took place from June 12 – 29, 2017. It happened from Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., at Sparta Elementary School. A total of 70 students from all three elementary schools congregated at Sparta: 22 in grade 1, 22 in grade 2, and 26 in grade 3. The camp featured experiential learning to boost their literacy skills. In on activity students read *Blueberries for Sal* by award winning author and illustrator Robert McCloskey. Later the students made and ate some blueberry cobbler. In another activity, students took roles in a book and read their respective roles and read out loud their lines in a Readers Theater play. Figures 4 through 8 provide pictures of the summer program’s proceedings.

Figure 4: *Blueberries for Sal* Book Cover



Figure 5: A Student Reading *Blueberries for Sal*

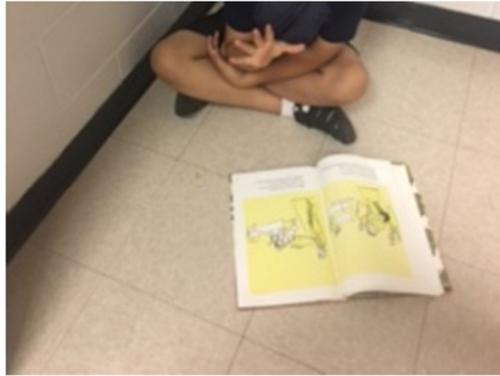


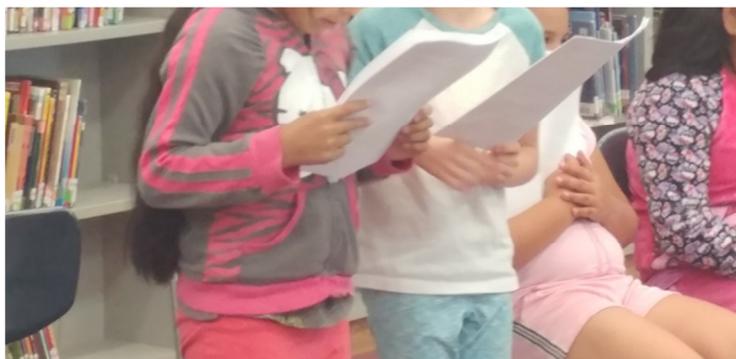
Figure 6: Students Making Blueberry Cobbler



Figure 7: A Student Enjoys His Cobbler Creation



Figure 8: Students at Work During Reader Theater



During the school year, the C2C project also underwrote the extended learning opportunities for struggling students during the school year. In both Years 1 and 2, teachers conducted after-school tutoring two to three times a week for struggling readers in grades 3 through 8. These sessions were held at the teachers' schools with App State staff and faculty overseeing the teachers working one-on-one with the struggling readers.

Teachers participating in the reading education program were among those providing tutoring to the students as part of their requirements for one of their clinical concentration courses Practicum in the Clinical Teaching of Reading (RE 5725). One of their program professors from App State and an App State staff member worked with them during their afterschool activities and provided support. During these tutoring sessions, participating teachers applied the Morris Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) to diagnose what the reading fluency was for the struggling students. Then the teachers used the IRI results to identify areas the students needed work and utilized appropriate reading materials and reading strategies to help the students gain self-confidence and improve their reading abilities. Teachers documented the whole process from administering the IRI to reporting and analyzing the results and to reporting on the various tutoring sessions, what worked and the progress that the students were making. While the tutoring sessions for the teachers in the reading education program concluded at the end of the program semester, tutoring for the students continued as long as the student continued to struggle and was reading below level. Table 5 presents a sample of the results record on the IRI for a student who received the assessment through one of the teachers participating in the program. The student's case study report is presented in the Appendix. Pseudonyms are used to protect the teacher's and student's identities.

Table 5: Sample Morris Reading Inventory Completed Summary Sheet

Student's Name: David X. Date(s): 10-11-16
Tutor/Examiner: Teacher B

| | | Word Rec. Isolation (WRI) | | Oral Reading in Context | | | Silent Reading in Context | | Listening Comp. | Spelling | |
|--------|---------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|-----------------|----------|-------|
| Levels | Flashed | Untimed | (WRC) Accuracy | Prosody | Rate in WPM | Comp. | Rate in WPM | Comp. | | Level | Stage |
| PP1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PP2 | 90 | 100 | 97 | | | | | | | | |
| P | 90 | 100 | 95 | | 70 | 100 | | | | | |
| 1-2 | 65 | 80 | 87 | | 51 | 100 | | | | 1 | 20 |
| 2 | 50 | 80 | 89 | | 48 | 90 | | | | 2 | 10 |
| 3 | 0 | 10 | | | | | | | | 3 | 0 |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 0 |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Level | Total Errors | MC | SC MC |
|-------|--------------|----|-------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Prosody

- 3 = very fluent
- 2 = fluent enough for that level
- 1 = disfluent

| Grade | Oral |
|-------|------------------------|
| P | 40 wpm _____ 45-85 wpm |
| 1-2 | |
| 2-1 | 60-85 wpm |
| 2-2 | 80-120 wpm |
| 3 | 80-135 wpm |
| 4 | 95-150 wpm |
| 5 | 105-155 wpm |
| 6 | 115-160 wpm |
| 7 | 125-160 wpm |
| 8 | 135-160 wpm |

MC = Meaning Change; SC = Self-Corrected

| READING LEVELS | Independent Level _____ | Instructional Level _____ | Frustration Level _____ |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Comments: | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| SPELLING LEVELS | | | |
| Comments: | | | |

Differentiated Instruction – Alleghany Literacy Project

High school teachers often struggled to engage students in literature and reading in general. The students' blasé response likely masked uneven or poor reading abilities but also challenges in finding relevance with the stereotypical high school curricula and media delivery with their 21st century lives. The Alleghany Literacy Project (ALP) was launched to provide high school teachers the support, strategies and tools needed to examine their practices and redesign their instruction to better bridge the content they share with students and the students. ALP utilized online asynchronous learning through a blog (see <https://alleghanyliteracy.wordpress.com/>) and face-to-face (F2F) collaboration with fellow AHS teachers and the instructor to revise and improve their lessons plans based on what they learned through their ALP blog work to make reading and learning more engaging and relevant to their students, particularly struggling students. The ALP was led by a professor in Duquesne University.

The online discussion typically involved a reading or two that the participants completed and then reacted by posting a comment about the reading(s) on the ALP blog and posting a response to two of their participants' comments. Comments were based on their reactions and reflections to three questions: 1) What did the participant learn from the reading(s); 2) What in the reading(s) touched them; and 3) How can they implement what they have learned? During their F2F collaboration, participants collaborate with one another with assistance from the instructor to incorporate what they learned in the ALP blog into their lessons.

Five AHS teachers took part in the Year 1 yearlong workshop, and four participated in Year 2. Three of the Year 1 participants were also involved in Year 2. All the participating teachers taught courses in the humanities: American history (standard and honors); civics; Spanish I, Spanish II, and Spanish III; teacher cadet I and teacher cadet II (courses for students interested in pursuing a career in education); library media center assistant; yearbook; and English II (standards and honors). All the participants were veteran teachers.

In Year 1, the focus on the workshop discussions and lesson planning centered on disciplinary literacy and strategies for using digital and social media to spur student engagement. Participants learned to use graphic organizers to help students grasp information and to build their disciplinary literacy and different ways to connect content with students' lives. For example, based on the reading from Shanahan and Shanahan (2008), the participants learned about the differences in literacy demands based on the discipline (e.g., mathematics, science, and history). Mathematics requires a precise use and understanding of language and meaning. Text is read as truth. In contrast historical texts are read with more analysis and nuance, based on the credibility of the author and the author's biases. Note-taking for understanding between the two subjects would be different, since mathematics would rely on memorization of terms and formulas, while history would look at events—who, what, when, where, how, and why—and relate them to one another based on the perspective of the protagonist (who) and the circumstances surrounding the events.

An example of a finished unit lesson plan that takes into account all of these points is an American history lesson on the Civil Rights Movement (see Appendix). One participant based his history lesson began with *Warriors Don't Cry*, a memoir by Melba Patillo Beals, one of the Little Rock Nine who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. The lesson included a study guide that provided benchmarks for students to follow as they read the chapters of the book. The unit lesson then extended to assignments that required students to look at two photographs taken during the Civil Rights Era and to analyze the photographs using the question prompts as guides. The unit lesson concluded with a student assignment to sit with “with a different group of people during [their] lunch period” and to record what transpired and their feelings and reflection in a journal.

In Year 2, the focus was on the use of graphic novels and other media aids such as movies based on the literature to engage students, particularly struggling readers or disinterested students. The online discussion and subsequent lesson plan work was kicked off by an article, “Graphic Novels in the Classroom” (2008) by noted Asian-American cartoonist Gene Yang. Presented in comic book format, the article made the case for utilization of graphic novels in the classrooms, which takes advantage of the visual-heavy media and text media today’s students live in with the permanence of print media. Students who struggle in reading or for whom English is second language are greatly aided by the images in combination with text. The images help scaffold their sense-making of unfamiliar words and syntax. Teachers created or revised lesson units and student project in response to the online discussion questions: 1) Do you think graphic novels would appeal to your students; and 2) How could you use graphic novels in your discipline?

In one example from the library media center assistant lesson, the participant teacher assigned students to create their own four-panel comic strip based on one of the characters from the *Scorch Trails* graphic novel. Then students were to submit a one page argumentative paper on the pros and cons of graphic novels in comparison to regular text novels in order to persuade the teacher to buy more or less graphic novels. In another example from a civics class, students were given an assignment to draw a cartoon strip showing their understanding of provisions in the U.S. Constitution, such as the appeals process, cruel and unusual punishment and presidential term limits. In another example, a teacher utilized novels based on a well-known television series—*The Walking Dead*—but this time presented in a graphic novel format in Spanish. Students created storyboards of verbs, and created commercials in Spanish—either in print or on video—for the student-designed survival kits. Examples of these varied uses of graphic novels, including sample student work are available in the Appendix.

The Appalachian State University
Reading Education MA Degree
Program with Classroom/Clinical
Concentration

Total Required Credit Hours 36
Hours (Minimum); 39 Hours with
Thesis

- Research Course (3 Hours)
- Social/Anthropological/Philosophical Foundations Course (3 Hours)
- Concentration Requirements (21 Hours)
 - Teaching Beginning Readers and Writers (3 Hours)
 - Teaching the Language Arts (3 Hours)
 - Advanced Study of Children's Literatures (3 Hours)
 - Reading Assessment and Correction (3 Hours)
 - Practicum in the Clinical Teaching of Reading (3 Hours)
 - Reading and Writing Instruction for Intermediate and Advanced Learners (3 Hours)
 - Seminar in the Clinical Teaching of Reading (3)
- Thesis (9 Hours) or Product of Learning (13 Hours) and Graduate Electives (9 Hours)

C2C Participants took the without Thesis route and took the Product of Learning course and graduate electives.

Differentiated Instruction – Reading Education Program

The Appalachian State University (App State) has been offering a reading education program to incumbent educators interested in specializing in literacy. Teachers enrolled in the program complete 39 credit hours of coursework and practicum to earn a master's degree in one of two concentrations: adult literacy for teachers and administrators interested in “deliver[ing] and coordinat[ing] literacy services for adults seeking to improve their reading and writing skills” and classroom/clinical for K-12 teachers and reading specialists interested in instruction of “all aspects of reading and language arts” (Appalachian State University Reading Education Master of Arts program website, n.d.). The C2C Project provided tuition reimbursement for current ACS teachers pursuing the latter concentration. The participating teachers pursued their program course of study as a cohort. The side bar showcases the requirements that these ACS teachers had to meet to complete in order to earn their master's degree in reading education. Graduates of the program qualify for the reading specialist license.

Twelve ACS teachers began the program in Year 1, with 10 successfully completing the requirements for the program and earning their degree in August 2017. One participant unexpectedly passed away while matriculating in the program, and another participant left the program near the end of Year 2 before completing all the requirements. Ninety percent of the program graduates taught in elementary schools, with most coming from Sparta Elementary School. Seventy-eight percent of the program graduates were novice teachers, with three years or less experience in teaching prior to starting the program. This finding was indicative of an exodus of veteran teachers through retirements. Prior to the program, 33% had elementary grades only certification, 22% were certified to teach elementary grades and preschool as an add-on certification and 11% had certification in elementary grades and elementary mathematics. Figures 9 through 11 elaborate on these findings.

Figure 9: The Majority of the C2C Reading Program Graduates Come from Sparta Elementary School (N=10)

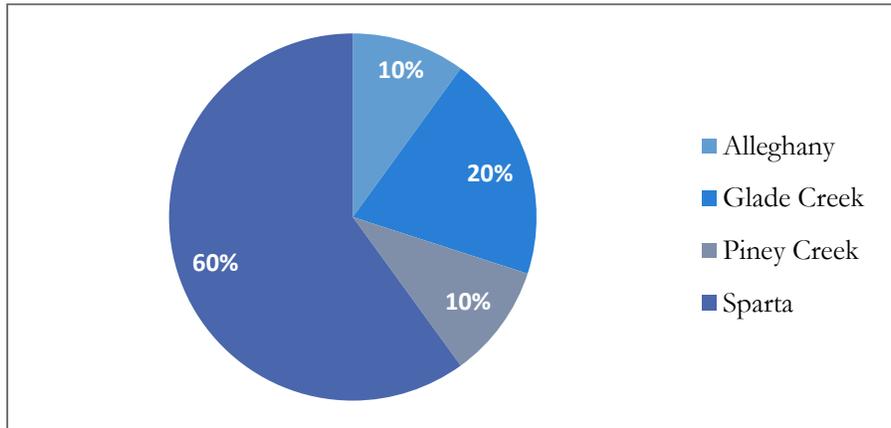


Figure 10: Majority of C2C Reading Graduates 3 Years or Less Teaching Experience (N=9)

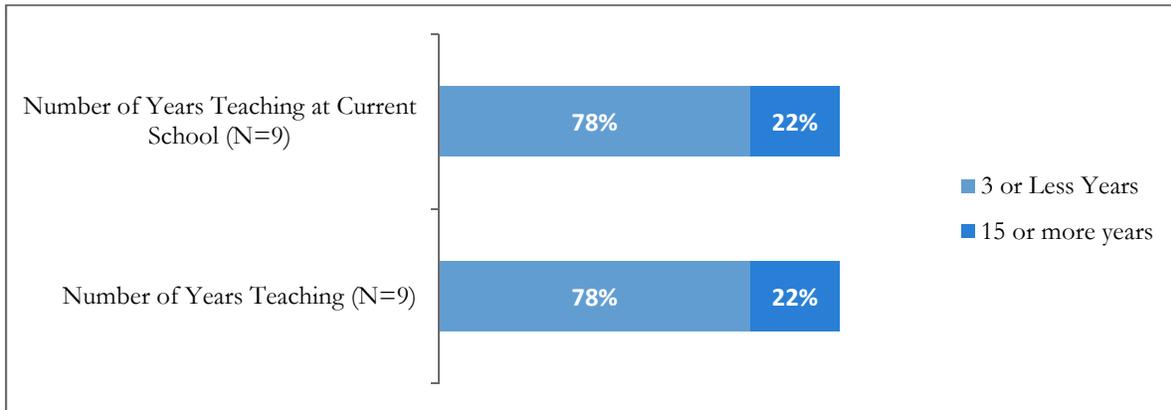
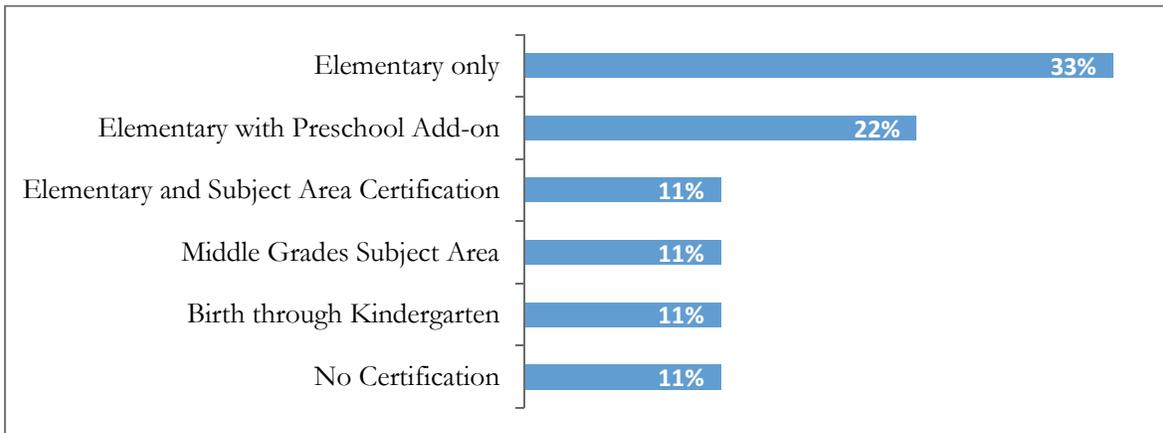


Figure 11: 33% of C2C Reading Program Graduates Had Elementary Grades Only Certification Prior to Program (N=9)



While the teachers taught students who were predominantly white, they have encountered greater diversity in their classrooms. Nearly all have had Latino students in their classrooms, many of whom were also their ESL (English as a second language) students. Some of their ESL students eventually test out of this designation. Some had migrant students, with teachers from Glade Creek receiving more migrant students than the other two schools. Migrant students would begin to trickle in during the third week of December. Some teachers who had taught for several years witnessed the same migrant students cycle through into the ACS system and had observed their progression from grade to grade.

The teachers' classrooms featured students with diverse in cognitive and developmental abilities. The students' academic abilities varied by individual and by classroom, one teacher specialized in teaching Exceptional Children and had an entire class of students with varying with disabilities (SWD), including students who

- had physical disabilities
- were developmentally delayed
- had visual and/or hearing impairments, and/or
- were on the autism disorder spectrum.

Other teachers taught SWD students in an inclusive classroom setting which also included at grade-level and advanced students.

Students' reading abilities also varied by individual and by classroom, with some several reading levels behind while others were quite advanced and reading four grades above their grade level. For teachers who taught students in PreK through grade 3—the early elementary grades—cognitive and psychosocial development level of the students also played a role in their reading abilities. For example, one teacher remarked that a male student she taught was shy, did not talk much and took a little bit longer to adjust to the classroom setting. This affected his reading ability. The sidebar summarizes the demographics of each of the teachers' schools.

When asked what they didn't know before participating in the program, the graduating participants pointed out their lack of skills and knowledge in

Alleghany County Schools Demographics

Glade Creek Elementary (preK 8)

Student Body: 259

- White: 70%
- Latino: 29%
- Other: 1%
- FARMs Eligible*: 98%

Student Teacher Ratio: 12:1

Piney Creek Elementary (preK 8)

Student Body: 171

- White: 91%
- Latino: 9%
- FARMs Eligible: 98%

Student Teacher Ratio: 12:1

Sparta Elementary (preK 8)

Student Body: 593

- White: 71%
- Latino: 25%
- 2+ Races: 3%
- Black: 1%
- FARMs Eligible: 99%

Student Teacher Ratio: 12:1

Alleghany High (9 12)

Student Body: 454

- White: 85%
- Latino: 14%
- Other: 1%
- FARMs Eligible: 54%

Student Teacher Ratio: 13:1

* FARMs free and reduced meals

“effective ways to help struggling readers and writers.” Specifically, teachers were unaware of instructional strategies such as “how to have kindergarten students write each day” or supporting “leveled reading strategies, [which necessitates assignment students to read] three books a day to increase student achievement as emergent and beginning readers”. Two teachers pointed out that prior to the program they did not know “the importance of spelling and using it to see what children know about words and sounds.” Several teachers also admitted they struggled with how to assess students’ reading abilities and then following up with strategies and interventions based on those assessments. It was noteworthy that veteran and novice teachers admitted similar deficiencies prior to the program. The program’s course of study addressed participants’ perceived lack of knowledge, skills and even dispositions toward helping improve struggling students become better readers and writers. When asked to name four new things they learned from their course of study, the teachers named various assessments to diagnose students’ abilities, various instructional strategies to add to their toolkit of intervention, resources, and dispositions. Table 6 summarizes what the teachers reported.

Table 6: Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions Gained through the Reading Education Program

| | Knowledge | Skills | Dispositions |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| General | <i>“Different genres of picture books”</i> | | <i>“More about teaching in general and how to use what I learned to help my students, school and community.”</i> |
| Assessment | Morris IRI; <i>“assessment for emergent readers, beginning readers and self-reliant readers;”</i> ERSI (Early Reading screening Inventory); <i>“spelling assessments to guide reading instruction”</i> | <i>“administering reading assessment”</i> | |
| Instruction | DRTA (Direct Reading Thinking Activity) and DLTA (Direct Learning; Thinking Activity); Writer’s Notebook; <i>“using picture books to teach philosophy;”</i> Word Study; padlets; bio-cubes; | <i>“Use of technology to support and accelerate readers;”</i> tutoring strategies; <i>“day-by-day lesson plans for struggling readers;”</i> <i>“innovative ways to bring writing in all classrooms;”</i> <i>“to teach to instructional levels;”</i> <i>“move children through the progressions of reading levels;”</i> opinion writing; teaching poetry; | Modeling; <i>“encouraging students to work at their level and not pushing them to frustration level;”</i> <i>“becoming a better writing teacher”</i> |

These gains added more tools to their existing teachers’ toolbox of strategies and resources prior to the program. Table 7 presents what the teachers had been used prior to their enrollment in the reading education program.

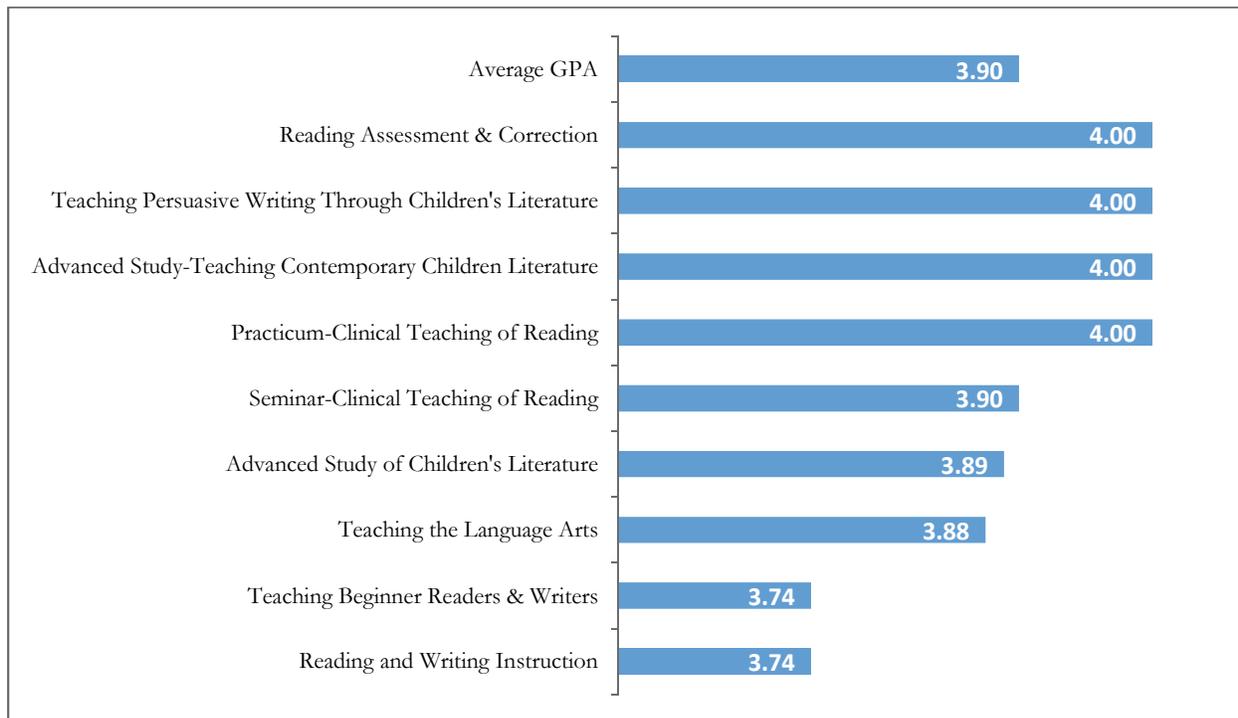
Table 7: Materials & Resources Participants Used Prior to the Reading Program

| | Materials/Resources | Instructional Strategies |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Assessment | mCLASS: DIBELS, TRC (text reading comprehension portion of mCLASS (Note: DIBELS and TRC were standard assessment tools in North Carolina); teacher-designed spelling test; Scholastic Expert 21™ | CBM (curriculum-based measurement) for monitoring; mCLASS Progress Monitoring" |
| Reading Instruction | Letterland Phonics; Study Island; "FUNdations; Wilson; Notice and Note: Using signposts given by Martha Lamb; Scootpad; Scholastic Accelerated Reader Collections™; Daily 5; Words Their Way; Café; Starfall; Reading A to Z; Worldly Wise | Read Alouds; Foundations of Reading |
| Writing Instruction | Scholastic Expert 21™ writing prompts | Teacher-designed unit lessons in exposition and narrative writing and letter-writing with a finished letter to send to a friend or relative; North Carolina State Standards writing prompts |

The C2C Project also provided funding for the purchase of reading books for the classrooms and school libraries to build the capacity for reading level-appropriate books that the students would enjoy and learn from. The additional resources and training afforded by the reading education program enhanced the participating teachers' abilities to teach reading and writing to their students.

The participants' gains in knowledge, skills, and dispositions were reflected in their end-of-course grades (EOC). Figure 12 presents the average EOC grades for much of the coursework they completed for the program. It highlights the courses they took to meet the concentration requirements. Generally across individual EOC grades, the lowest grade was a 3.0.

Figure 12: Average End-of-Course Grades for Reading Education Program Participants (N=9)



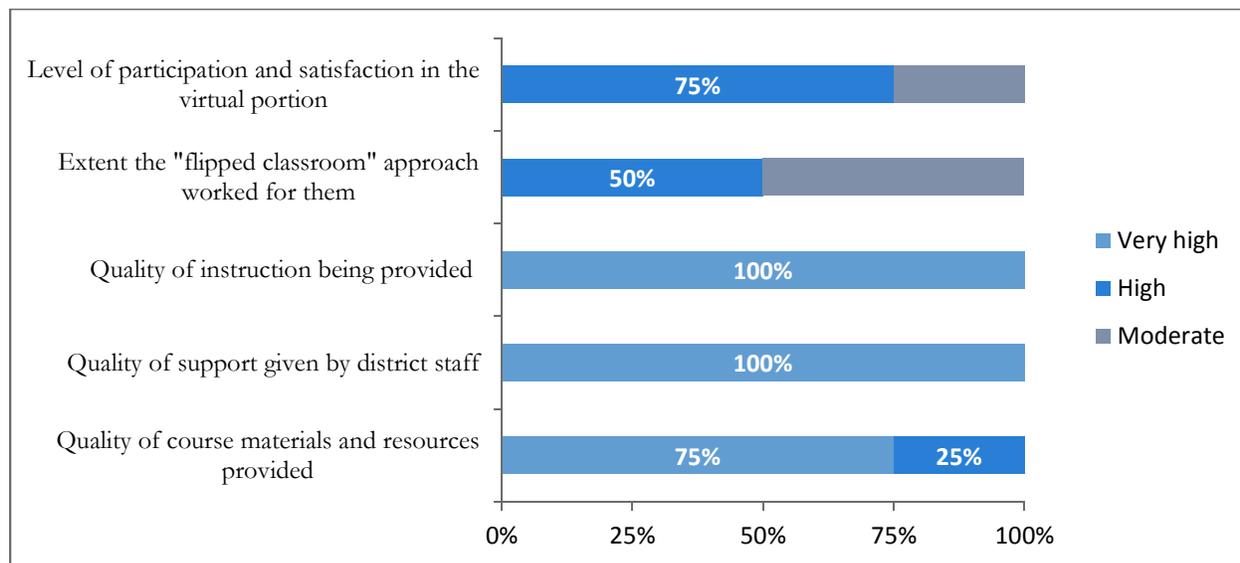
Evaluation Question 2: What aspects of the C2C project have worked well?

C2C activities that did well were those that were implemented to their completion. As shown above, the activities and programs within the C2C project that have worked particularly well were those that involved the purchase and delivery of resources and training to increase literacy. These included the early literacy curriculum program RIOA and Letterland Phonics, and age- and grade-appropriate reading books for the book distribution during family literacy nights at the elementary schools and books for the school and classroom libraries for the teachers participating in the App State reading education program. They also included the purchase of e-readers that are available on loan from the Alleghany County Library. While the WFBB is ongoing through the SY 2017-18, the curricula and training have concluded as expected and implementation is expected to occur as planned.

Moreover the C2C activities that took place over the short and extended term also worked well. Summer literacy camps and the one-on-one tutoring took place as planned and were well attended by the target student population groups. The ALP and App State reading education program also took place as planned with teachers who participated in either program reporting satisfaction with their professional

development experiences. Figure 13 encapsulates their responses to questions regarding their satisfaction with aspects of the ALP in Year 2.

Figure 13: Participants Were Highly or Very Highly Satisfied with Their Year 2 ALP Experience (N=4)



Out of the four participants in Year 2, 75% reported a high degree of satisfaction with the ALP, with the remaining participant expressing moderate satisfaction. Half of the participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with the flipped classroom approach used in the teachers' classrooms, while the other half was moderately satisfied. Participants who were moderately satisfied qualified their responses as follows:

- *It is just taking a while to build a library. My classes benefit from them... I just have to be conscious to take time to get my part done.* [The teacher was referring to building up her library of resources specific to her subject area].
- *I still had problems with students watching the video at home. The problem was mainly with my regular U.S. history class. The flip classroom was very successful for my honors class.*

Teachers had added graphic novels and more audiovisual media to their repertoire of strategies used to help students become better readers. Among the strategies or approaches were

- Skim and scan to get the main idea
- Predict questions

- Build vocabulary using the *LINCS*⁵ format
- Urge students to take more responsibility for their reading and encourage greater student agency in their learning
- Use of interactive notebooks
- Use of visuals, such as quick-write and quick-draws
- Use of graphic organizers like KWL (i.e., what I **KNOW**, what I **WONDER**, what I **LEARNED**)
- Use of Readers Theaters

The strategies learned in Year 2 were seamlessly integrated into their already extensive use of technologies in the classrooms. One participant wrote, “Technology is an extension of our learning environment in each of my classes.” Another shared,

We used Chromebooks almost every day. We were constantly using technology to invent new graphic novels, time lines, and integrated reading skills.

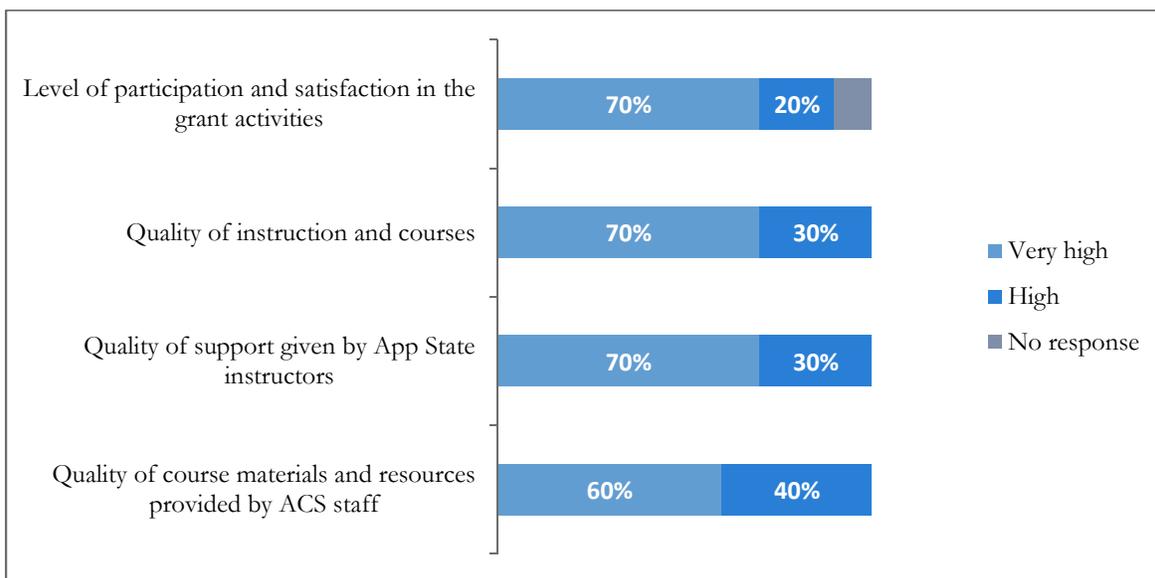
Another fellow participant shared,

I used technology each and every day. The key was to use technology to get students to be able to create their own products. We had been using technology to connect with other students in foreign classrooms. We were not reading classical texts...but shared emails/texts from these students. Students preferred these concise texts and do not seem as overwhelmed. Students also created Google surveys using information they gathered from their readings. Students were reading/watching BrainPop each day and answering questions. They were blogging/sharing information with their classmates.

Participants used other applications besides Google Forms™ and BrainPop™. For one participant who oversaw the yearbook and the library media center assistant courses, applications such as Herff Jones' eDesign™ online program, Adobe Photoshop™, Picasa 3™, Audacity™, Switch Sound™, Gmail™, Google Docs™, Voice Thread™, Glogster™, and StoryBoard™, were also used. Another participant had students use flip cameras for class projects and applications such as Study Island™, Canvas™, and student blogs. Similarly, participants from the reading education program reported they were very satisfied with the C2C experiences. Figure 14 summarizes their responses.

⁵ LINCS stands for **L**ist the parts, **I**dentify a reminding word, **n**ote a linking story, **c**reate a linking picture, and **s**elf test. See <https://prezi.com/yesxbemofgul/the-lincs-vocabulary-strategy/> for more information.

Figure 14: A Vast Majority of the Reading Education Program Were Very Satisfied (N=10)



Their comments further elaborated on their positive assessment of their C2C experiences. For instance when asked what reading strategies are they using to make students better readers, one participant wrote,

Dr. [App State faculty member]’s class is outstanding. I have been using ideas in my class since this past fall. I love his technique of rereading 3 books. I rotate the old book out and a new book in so my students always have 3 books to read at home. I am seeing my students’ fluency increase, their confidence increase and their sight word knowledge increase as well.

Another said, “The professors are top-notch!” in response to questions about what they have generally experienced with their program course of study. Furthermore, their positive impressions extended to the App State staff member who was the reading specialist for the 1-on-1 tutoring practicum:

She has been wonderful to work with. She is very knowledgeable about student reading levels and assessments and book levels and she can suggest instructional practices to help advanced students.

To elaborate on her positive feedback regarding the resources made available through the C2C project, one participant shared that

..There are many books being purchased with the grant, my school in the county Piney Creek Elementary is the smallest and the library was lacking greatly in diversity. The books bought were greatly needed. I am also looking forward to receiving and using the Leveled Rigby books for my kindergarten class.

One comment encapsulated how their colleagues felt about their reading education program experiences:

This grant is allowing me to pursue a master's degree for free and the professors are traveling to my school. It is an amazing opportunity! I am most grateful to be a part of it.

Evaluation Question 3: What issues presented hurdles to C2C's successful implementation?

Several issues presented hurdles to C2C's successful implementation. First, as summarized above, an unusually high turnover in leadership for the C2C project led to a slow, uneven implementation of C2C during Year 1. This resulted in a reduced menu of activities with commensurate less funding in Year 2. Second, all participating schools experienced challenges in sustained parent engagement. This underlying issue undermined the C2C project's plans to implement the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program. There were no viable candidates who would fill the critical role of parent educator. This greatly affected efforts for the systematic and coordinated activities to improve early literacy in the county among families with children from birth to age 5. Though resources such as RIOA and e-readers were purchased and made available for early childhood providers and parents of these children at the Alleghany County Library, the providers and parents did not receive the kind of wraparound support envisioned in the earlier proposal that would have strengthen the pipeline of children ready to learn when they enter preschool in the three elementary schools.

Moreover, teachers noted that parents themselves struggled with literacy. During a focus group discussion, at least one teacher remarked that some of the parents or guardians they encountered had a weak grasp of the English language themselves. English was their second language. In other cases, parents were high school dropouts and were illiterate. While parents do participate in large numbers at events such as family literacy nights, they did so during the early grades and in events which were self-contained. Parent/guardian engagement in the later elementary grades and beyond decreased. High school participants noted in their school, parent engagement at the high school level was non-existent.

A third issue was the underlying high level of poverty in the county. As shown in the side bar of school demographics, all four Alleghany County schools had nearly 100% of their students eligible for free and reduced meals (FARMs). FARMs was an estimate of the level of poverty in a community. It also indicated the reliance for capital investments from outside community to build human and material capital in the community. This was clearly illustrated by one comment from a reading education program teacher:

I feel very fortunate to have been able to participate in the grant. It has been a great deal of work, but in our county we have many, many struggling readers. We do not have teacher assistants in classrooms except in kindergarten and pre-k, and we do not have Title I reading teachers in our school. So the classroom teacher is all the instruction that most of our students get. So we provide needs to be the best that we are able to provide.

The problems or issued above described factors in rural poverty that make it frustrating and difficult to surmount. They are the same factors that C2C project attempted to address. These factors were

- outmigration of people
- chronic underinvestment in public goods and services,
- lack of adequate resources for rural residents to participate in society, and
- an anemic civic culture (National Center for Frontier Communities, 2010).

The C2C project encountered each of these factors during its grant year. In a sense the C2C project were working to address these factors while at the same time experiencing them from within. The C2C project struggled yet persisted, and the activities under the revised plan were implemented to meet their expected outputs. As a result the project provided hope that the larger problem of rural poverty could be addressed.

Evaluation Question 4: What are the areas of improvement for C2C?

At this closing stage of the grant period, areas of improvement for the C2C project will rest on how to sustain the real and perceived positive impacts that the project brought to being. As in the start of the project, close monitoring across the project is still necessary. More detailed documentation of participants attending the various activities or receiving resources made possible by the C2C grant funds will help determine if changes in literacy could be attributable to the C2C-related resources and activities. This may also help in communicating and sustaining any effects of the project. Additional areas for improvement are described below under the Recommendations section of the report.

Impact Evaluation

Evaluation Question 5: How has the C2C project contributed to improving literacy among the K-12 students in Alleghany County Public Schools?

The C2C project contributed to improving literacy among the K-12 students in Alleghany County Schools in at least three ways. One way was through the purchase and distribution of resources that went directly to students. These included the many books provided through the book distribution during literacy family nights, new books that were purchased for the school and classroom libraries of C2C participating teachers, and the e-readers in Alleghany County Library. Another way was through the purchase of curriculum programs: Letterland Phonics, RIOA, and eventually WFBB. A third way was at the golden intersection of instruction, content and learner. At this junction, C2C facilitated professional development training and literacy strategies affected teacher instructional practices. This in turn affected how students come to understand the content—from alphabet recognition and sounds to words, sentences and ideas.

For example, one reading education program teacher recounted that before the program the typical classroom instruction for learning new vocabulary is to provide a list of words, have students practice them and be tested on them. Then the cycle was repeated for the next set of words. From the reading education program, the teacher adopted the Wordly Wise program which involved multiple activities and different ways of student engagement (e.g., draw a picture to show what the word means, be rewarded for using the word in regular conversation). Teachers learned ways to move learning vocabulary words beyond short-term memorization to daily use in oral and aural language, reading and written language for students. Teachers learned to switch from ineffective ways of teaching literacy and learned to more effective ways that work for students of varying abilities and needs.

Another example is shown in the Appendix of the case study of David X. Through the reading education program, teachers learned different ways of assessing students' literacy abilities and providing support customized to the student. In the case study, the teacher administered the Morris IRI to David X, which tested his literacy abilities through spelling, word recognition in isolation (WRI), contextual reading, and listening comprehension. As a nine-year old student in grade 3, David demonstrated that his spelling and phonics were below grade 1: he was mixing up his vowels and he didn't fully grasp combinations of consonants such as "dr" and "tr" such as "drain" and "train." His word recognition abilities were at an early grade 1 level, but when the teacher read to him, his listening comprehension was at a grade 4 level. The

teacher was able to provide a diagnosis and a course of instruction that would the teacher and others meet David's specific needs and abilities:

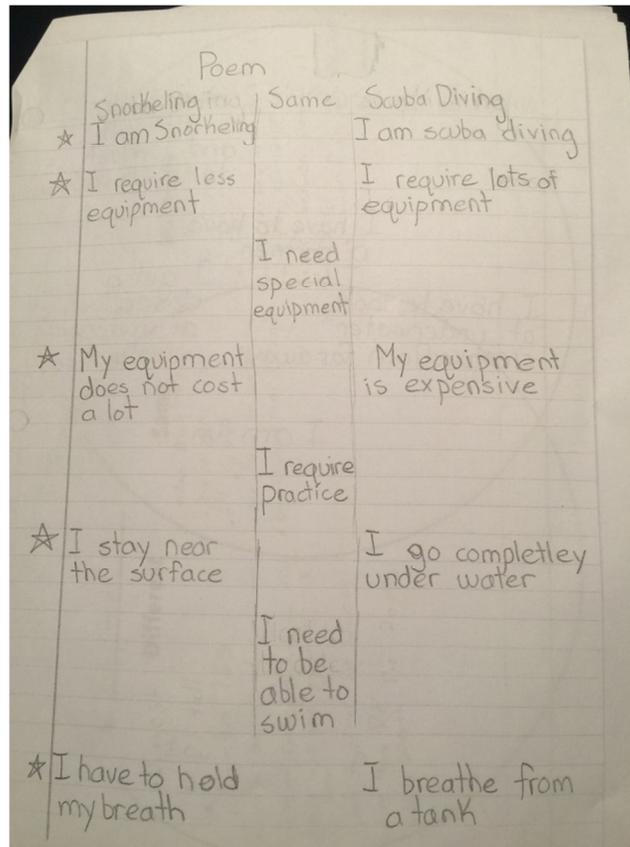
- For reading - *For David's reading instruction, he would benefit from a variety of reading materials on his instructional level and independent level. He needs stories that are of interest to him that he can actually read. Finding books that are on a first grade level but would interest a 3rd grade boy. He also needs texts that appeal to him that are at his instructional level so he can make progress. This level would be at the end of 1st grade.*
- For word study - *There are many games that David can play to help him with word sorting. Speed sorting and Bingo are games that young children love to play. After spending a few days on the sorts and games, a spelling test needs to be taken to check for understanding. If spelling test shows mastery, move on to the next sort. If David doesn't show that he understands, go back and review what needs to be taught again. The reason for word sorts for David is so that he can internalize the sorts and be able to read other words with the same patterns when he comes across them in his reading.*
- For listening comprehension - *For David, this is important because he needs to be exposed to rich vocabulary. I would read texts that are on a 3rd grade or 4th grade reading level to David. Listening to someone read higher level texts exposes the students to language that isn't being used in their reading leveled texts.*

By using an easy-to-use and vetted assessment⁶, teachers provided a more nuanced diagnosis and a commensurate course of instruction to remediate struggling learners' reading abilities. As a result, course of instruction during the tutoring sessions included targeted literacy strategies such as level reading, word sorts and repeated readings, which the teachers also learned as part of the program course of study. In at least two case study reports from teachers, two students who received tutoring with the commensurate course of instruction as per diagnosis saw their reading gap close to the point that they were at or near their grade level for instruction. In other words, a struggling first-grader who was diagnosed at the pre-primer or early primer stage of literacy in January was able to catch up and be a late grade 1/potential grade 2 reader by June.

Another example was how teachers applied lessons that were part of their own assignments for the reading education program and modified it to their grade level students. During one App State course, teachers were assigned to write a poem. Figure 15 shows a student's submitted assignment for grade 6 class that previously learned about Venn diagrams.

⁶ The Morris Informal Reading Inventory has been shown to be a valid and credible alternative assessment to DIBELS and other standardized assessment. See Morris, D., Trathen, W., Perney, J., Gill, T., Schlagal, R., Ward, D., & Fry, E. M. (2017). Three DIBELS tasks vs. three informal reading/spelling tasks: A comparison of predictive validity. *Reading Psychology, 38*(3), 289-320.

Figure 15: Sample Poetry Assignment from Grade 6 Student



Figures 16 and 17 demonstrate a lesson for a kindergarten class that looked at poetic phrasing of words that the students used to describe apples.

Figure 16: Kindergarten Class-Generated “Poetic” Words To Describe Apples and Apple Sauce

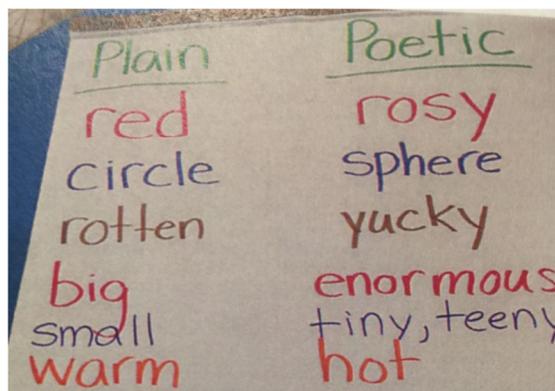
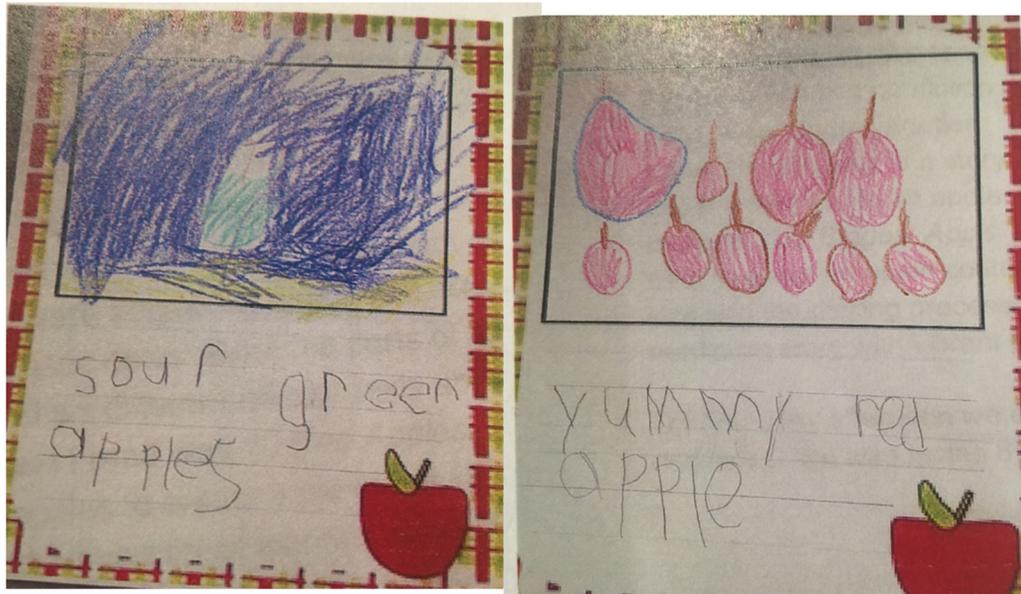


Figure 17: Samples of Kindergarten Student Assignment Describing Apples



In the middle grade class at least one student learned far more than what the assignment’s main objectives were about. In the teacher’s own words,

Alex, who normally hates poetry and hangs back from participating, surprised me the most. He was really into the project and was one of the more vocal contributors to his group. As they worked, I asked him what he was finding most enjoyable about the experience. He responded that he liked this better than a book report or writing paragraphs, because it gave him a chance to think about the topic in a more personal perspective. When I asked him what he meant, he said that you could give the speaker ‘attitude’ and you could make it have more or less attitude as the poem went on. I was surprised to hear this sixth grader talk about using word choice, voice and persuasion so naturally, even though when I try to formally teach these concepts he struggles to catch my meaning...He took my lesson and expanded it to the next level of evaluation, claim, and supporting reasons.

Similarly, in a kindergarten class, one student within the autism spectrum broke out of her usual shell, and became deeply engaged with the class assignment on poems. The student joined circle time and contributed to the classroom discussion.

Even in the ALP, students debated about the benefits of reading a story in the graphic novel format compared to the benefits of reading the same story in full text. This mimicked the online decision their teachers had during the workshop when they were first exposed to the idea of using graphic novels as a literary work in the classroom. The assignment and a student’s persuasive essay are featured in the Appendix.

mCLASS DIBELS Next® and Reading 3D® results from two teachers who participated in the reading education program provided some suggestive, corroborating results. However, due to the small sample size and other contributing factors such as maturation, the results were more illustrative than

conclusive. Table 8 shows data for Teacher 1, and Table 9 shows data for Teacher 2. The DIBELS Next® scores presented below reflected the composite degree of support the student needs. Students with the most need were identified as in “need of intensive support.” Those who did well but still need some support were identified as in “need of strategic support,” while those who needed only minimum support were identified as in “need of core support.” In the Reading 3D® assessment, students were defined by their reading level ability from as low as exhibiting some degree of reading behavior and understanding of print concepts to as high as advanced fluent. These corresponded roughly to the students grade level from pre-school to high school. To be at grade level by the end of the year, a kindergarten student at would be at the emergent/early reader level, while a grade 1 student would be at the early reader level. Students who were at least at grade level by the end of the year are **bolded in green**.

Table 8: mCLASS DIBELS Next® and Reading 3D® Results (2016-17) for Reading Education Program Teacher 1

| Student # | DIBELS Next® (at End of Year) | Reading 3D® |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Grade 1 | | |
| Student 1 | Needs intensive support | Emergent → Emergent/Early |
| Student 2 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 3 | Needs intensive support | Emergent → Emergent/Early |
| Student 4 | Needs intensive support | Reading Behaviors → Emergent/Early |
| Student 5 | Needs core support | Reading Behaviors → Emergent/Early |
| Student 6 | Needs strategic support | Emergent/Early → Emergent/Fluent |
| Student 7 | Needs intensive support | Reading Behaviors → Emergent/Early |
| Student 8 | Needs intensive support | Reading Behaviors → Emergent/Early |
| Kindergarten | | |
| Student 9 | Needs strategic support | Reading Behaviors → Emergent/Early |
| Student 10 | Needs core support | Reading Behaviors → Emergent/Early |
| Student 11 | Needs core support | Reading Behaviors → Early |
| Student 12 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early |
| Student 13 | Needs core support | Reading Behaviors → Emergent/Early |
| Student 14 | Needs core support | Print Concepts → Emergent/Early |
| Student 15 | Needs intensive support | Print Concepts |

Table 9: Table 8: mCLASS DIBELS Next® and Reading 3D® Results (SY 2016-17) for Reading Education Program Teacher 2

| Student # | DIBELS Next® (at End of Year) | Reading 3D® |
|----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Grade 1 | | |
| Student 1 | Needs strategic support | Emergent → Early/Fluent |
| Student 2 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 3 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 4 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 5 | Needs intensive support | Emergent → Emergent/Early |
| Student 6 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 7 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 8 | Needs strategic support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 9 | Needs core support | Reading Behaviors → Emergent/Early |
| Student 10 | Needs intensive support | Reading Behaviors → Emergent/Early |
| Student 11 | Needs strategic support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 12 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 13 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |
| Student 14 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early |
| Student 15 | Needs strategic support | Emergent/Early → Early |
| Student 16 | Needs core support | Emergent/Early → Early/Fluent |

Standardized assessment results for the middle grades provided fewer corroborating evidence. Results were based on only one middle grades teacher who participated in the program. Therefore the sample was too small. Most of the results showed a one-year drop in the mean percentage of difference between the 2016 and the 2017 administration of the end-of-year tests. The differences ranged from a mean decrease of 2.7% (language) to 29.2% (statistics & probability). Statistics and probability test results were also included because they require reading and interpreting word problems.

Evaluation Question 6: What are the perceived impacts of the C2C project?

While the C2C project could be seen as having contributed to improving literacy among the K-12 students—and is expected to continue to do so in the foreseeable future, the area with the most perceived impacts is seen among the teachers who received considerable training through the project, the reading education program teachers in particular, and the Alleghany Literacy Project teachers to a lesser extent. Based on the reflection essays submitted by the reading education program teachers, and some of the survey responses from the ALP teachers, the C2C project appeared to have profoundly changed how the teachers

looked at themselves, how they looked at and how they worked with their students, and how they see their professions.

Upon reflection, several teachers saw how they had easily fallen into the standardized testing stupor in which testing drove their work. The C2C project helped them re-examine their instructional practices and to gain new knowledge, skills and dispositions. These knowledge, skills, and dispositions were found to cluster along several teacher identity and value themes: the teacher as

- model learner, reader, writer and thinker
- student advocate
- diagnostician/clinician, and
- researcher.

Teacher as Model Learner, Reader, Writer and Thinker. Teachers had reported being caught up with the process of schooling that they forgot the “why” they do what they do greatly influenced how they worked with their students. Teachers realized that they should model behaviors in learning, reading, writing and thinking that they expected their students for the rest of their lives.

In one of the more profound epiphanies stemming from the course of study, one of the reading education program graduates wrote, “the most important learning I received in this course [RE 5537 Advanced Study of Teaching Contemporary Children’s Literature], in my opinion, is the idea that books ‘are tools for growing minds’ (Johnston, 2012, p. 56)”.The teacher saw the lesson objectives not only as the sole goals to meet. She realized that books were ways to introduce areas of philosophy, even to kindergarten students, and picture books were an avenue “to explore social justice through critical literacy as well as dialogic classrooms and postmodern picture books.” Another teacher credited the App State professors and their courses for helping her see that

...children’s literature opens worlds for students beyond what I could have ever imagined. I learned that through the use of children’s text I can introduce my students to the world around them and take them on journeys in to places they could never travel otherwise.

Several teachers admitted that their App State professors’ assignments such as reading and writing poetry, made them uncomfortable. However, they said that the assignments also helped them be better readers and writers and better reading and writing teachers. They learned to sympathize with their students as they undergo lessons that they initially resisted. As one teacher put it,

I like to teach the same way each [time] because it's my comfort zone. This course has nudged me to move outside of my comfort zone at times and I think I am a better teacher for it.

Teacher as Student Advocate. Being a student advocate required teachers to see their students realistically, to see learning through their students' perspective, and to let their students own their own learning. For example, one teacher came to realization that while she may have espoused cultural diversity, her classroom practices did not wholly reflect that value. The program provided a mirror through which she came to the realization that she needed to be more deliberate in order to truly practice cultural diversity.

I would like to emphasize cultural diversity more in my classroom. It never occurred to me read books depicting children from different nationalities...Your class has helped me realize that children deserve to see children like themselves in books I read to them. I had an Asian student two years ago and I know I never read a book with Asian characters. I am unhappy with myself for recognizing how important it is to my students and their self-esteem.

Later, the teacher learned to be more critical in her book selection and to be more open to culturally diverse and to be more culturally responsive through the activities she conducted in her class.

Through their work with professors from Duquesne and App State universities, the teachers also saw that their struggling readers need help too, if given proper, sustained support. Tools such as graphic novels and strategies such as DRTA, repeated reading, and word sorts, surprisingly helped their respective students experience growth in learning and in literacy abilities.

Teachers recognized that they too have to take a back seat and allow student agency and choice dictate student learning. As noted above in the example of Alex and the poetry assignment, prior efforts by the teacher to teach the concepts of word choice, voice and persuasion failed when she formally taught the skill but out of context. However, by allowing students the freedom to learn on their own, students and teachers alike had a more profound and memorable learning and teaching experience.

Teachers as Diagnostician/Clinician. As shown above in response to Evaluation 5, the reading education program spent considerable time and effort helping the teachers in the program learn how to use the Morris IRI, interpret the results and apply various strategies to help students overcome their difficulties and close their learning gaps. All the teachers the program noted how they perceived learning this technical and integrated body of knowledge and skills had greatly improved their instruction. Prior to seminar and practicum courses on clinical teaching of reading, one teacher noted that she would have had to refer the student in question to one or two specialists to determine where the student's difficulties lie. In the meantime the student would have lost valuable learning time, resulting in the student falling further behind academically. Teachers found the Morris IRI to be easier, just as effective, and could be administered with greater frequency than the DIBELS Next® and Reading 3D®. With the Morris IRI, the teacher noticed that she

could quickly customize her instructional supports to meet struggling student’s needs. Several teachers with struggling readers saw their efforts well rewarded through the use of Morris IRI. Several of their high-need, struggling readers experienced extensive learning gains.

Teacher as Researcher. Related to their work as diagnosticians and clinicians, teachers reported that their professors made them examine and re-examine what they did in the classroom and to question if their actions were effective. Teachers were asked to document every day their interactions with their students. One teacher admitted she initially balked at having to do another writing exercise on top of her already full workload. However, over time the journaling of her activities with her students provided a record she was able to follow of strategies and activities that worked or did not work with certain students. Teachers reported being more deliberate and analytical as a result.

In summary, teachers perceived themselves as becoming masters of their own profession. When asked if they perceived their colleagues and administrators treating them differently since they started with the program, teachers involved in the ALP and the reading education program acknowledged that they did notice a difference. They were being asked more questions about instruction and the types of materials they used. Their colleagues openly sought their advice. They also admitted feelings of increased confidence in their abilities and being fortunate of being part of the C2C Project. Figure 18 portrays most of the reading education program graduates upon receipt of their degree. Three were not available when the picture was taken.

Figure 18: Reading Education Program Graduates



Recommendations

Despite some challenges in Year 1, the ACS staff members were able to regain their footing and build both material and human capacity for literacy in Alleghany County through the C2C project. To continue to build capacity after the C2C Project funding period has ended, ACS may want to consider the following recommendations:

1. **Set aside professional development training days to convene as a community of practice (COP) teachers who participated in the Alleghany Literacy Project and the Reading Education Program.** These teachers would meet periodically face-to-face and virtually to become the county's hub for innovation in addressing literacy across the grades. The COP would also build each teacher's leadership skills beyond their respective classrooms and schools while remaining grounded in their classroom experiences.
2. **Build upon the existing collaboration in the schools to develop professional learning communities (PLCs) on literacy in each school.** The PLCs would be the natural course for disseminating and supporting promising practices from the Alleghany Literacy Project and the Reading Education Program. All the teachers interviewed through the discussion groups commented that a culture of collaboration existed at their schools. PLCs can be built on these existing collaborative relationships at the schools in order for teachers to share and learn together promising and best practices, strategies and interventions for students with various needs of support.
3. **Build an integrated system of supports from birth through grade 2.** Early elementary teachers who worked closely to implement C2C Project activities may be interested in working with community partners (e.g., Alleghany Partnership for Children, United Methodist Reading Revival, Alleghany Arts Guild, App State, Alleghany Public School Partnership), infant and family health care providers (e.g. App Health Care), early childhood providers, and the Alleghany County Library to build a system of supports to help family with children from infants to grade 2 be healthy and ready to learn. These community providers, advocates and leaders can help spearhead home visits to families with young children to build healthy practices that would set a solid foundation for learning. They can also be regular conduits for information about services and resources that the families can avail themselves with little or no cost.
4. **Investigate and pursue new program funding sources and partnerships to build instructional capacity.** ACS may want to look into the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Quality Partnerships program and submit a proposal that would expand the promising professional gains

made through the reading education program. ACS may want to partner with App State, a trusted partner, to train more teachers through the reading education program. ACS may want to also work with App State's STEM departments to seek opportunities to strengthen their teacher core in those disciplines as well.

5. **Work closely with researchers and evaluators in the future to design a realistic data collection system to better link project activities, measures, outputs and outcomes.** One of the major limitations of the current evaluation was that gaps existed in what instruments and data were available. Often times there were mismatches in expectations and the types of measures and instruments that could provide more definitive information about what is being impacted and how through a project or program's activities. If ACS pursues new program funding sources and partnerships, ACS can leverage those funding streams to build up processes and procedures for data collection at the beginning of the grant project.

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Appendix

Extended Learning Opportunities: One-on-One Tutoring Case Study

Student: David X., Male, Grade 3, Age 9

Assessments were administered in spelling, contextual reading, and listening comprehension to determine instructional levels and areas of needs and readiness in reading, word study, and being read to. A student's independent level in a particular area of literacy is the highest at which he or she can successfully work without instructional support. The instructional level is the optimal level for working with instructional support. The student's frustration level is where he or she can not readily benefit even with instructional support.

David was trying his best while participating in these assessments. You could tell, as the tests got harder for each section, he wasn't as eager to do the next list because it was becoming frustrating for him. He was able to see that he was getting more words wrong or that he needed more help from the teacher. David is also a child, if you tell him you can do it, he shuts down and says I can't. I tried to do my very best to not push that button and let him continue the tests to his best ability.

IRI (Informal Reading Inventory)

This test includes the following subtests: spelling, word recognition in isolation, contextual reading, and listening comprehension. Within the contextual reading, the following is assessed: accuracy, rate, and comprehension.

Spelling

The qualitative inventory of word knowledge is a grade leveled lists of words which the teacher asks the student to spell as best as he can. The specific list I used had 10 words per level. The purpose of this test is to determine a child's instructional level in spelling and phonics. For a child found to be independent on spelling and phonics on a certain level, he/she needs to have spelled 80% of the words correctly on the particular list. The highest test the child is spelling 50% - 79% of the spelling words is his/her instructional level in spelling and phonics. Lastly, if the student is spelling less than 50% of the words correctly, he/she is frustrated at that level. There is a gray area for spelling that lies in the 40th percentile. This would need to be looked at carefully to determine if the child is instructional or frustrated at that level. If they are spelling the words incorrectly, but the spelling is so close to being correct and you know the child understands, then it might be considered in the gray area. The reason for this test, in an IRI, is because spelling and being able to read go hand-in-hand. A child more than likely can read a lot more words than he/she can spell correctly but giving the spelling assessment provides an open door into a student's orthographic concept.

David scored 20% on the 1st grade spelling list and scored 10% on the 2nd grade spelling list. By looking at his test scores, I knew that he was already frustrated on the 1st grade list, scoring only 20%. He only got two words correct, trap and bed. His qualitative score was high enough, that I didn't need to step back a level. The thing I did notice was that he still didn't have his vowel sounds. Wish was spelled with an e and ship was spelled with an e. Dr in drop started with tr. You can predict, from the spelling inventory that David will struggle with possibly a first grade text because of his vowel mix up. You can predict that David

would struggle, as the year passes on, if he were to be in first grade. He could possibly be on level at the beginning of first grade but at the end of first grade, he would more than likely become frustrated. 1st grade is a grade where lots of reading is learned and growth takes place.

Word Recognition in Isolation

The WRI (Word Recognition in Isolation) is a subtest where a student is reading grade leveled lists of words that are being flashed (timed) to them. If the child is unable to read the words when they are flashed, then they are able to look at the word a little longer (untimed). The point of this test is to test the automaticity a child has while reading the words out of context. Word recognition in isolation is a test that is administered to see what words a child can recognize automatically. It's been proven, if a child can read words automatically out of text, their reading abilities are higher than of someone that is unable to read the words automatically when they are being flashed to them. Word recognition is the foundation for becoming a better reader. The students continue with each list until they become frustrated with a list (below 50%) timed. The highest level at which the student recognized at least 75% of the flashed words denotes that student's instructional level in spelling and phonics. The flash score shows the students level of automaticity while the untimed score shows the decoding skills of the child.

David, on the kindergarten list (pre-primer 2), was able to get 90% of the words correct for the timed portion. When I allowed him to have an untimed chance, he was able to tell me 100% of the words. For the early 1st grade list (primer), he was able to do the same thing for the timed and untimed. The last first grade list is where I saw a drastic drop. For the untimed, he was only able to automatically all out 65% of the words and was able to pull that up to 80% when it was untimed. I went ahead and gave him the next two lists to see what he was able to do. On the second grade list, David was able to read 50% of the words automatically and on the 3rd grade list, his score dropped to 0% of automatically reading the words and on the untimed he only was able to read 2 of them, making that a score of 10%. Looking at his spelling scores related to his word recognition scores, I noticed that on the first grade spelling list he was close to spelling the words correctly, but on the 2nd grade list, he was missing diagraphs like th, ch, and sh. I knew from his spelling that he would have a difficult time reading 1st grade words but he would be really frustrated reading 2nd grade words and the WRI proved that. For the contextual reading, you can predict that David will be able to read on a primer level independently but with the end of 1st grade reading passage, he will need instructional support.

Contextual Reading

This test consists of 3 parts. The student will read a book or passage and will be evaluated based on their accuracy (WRC), rate (WPM), and comprehension. When a child reads orally, the evaluator is able to predict the child's developmental reading process. They are able to assess fluency, how fast they are reading. They can see if a child understands what he/she is reading. The evaluator starts the student with an easy passage. They are grade leveled passages. The student keeps on testing until he/she reaches a frustrational level. The highest passage that a student can read without becoming frustrated is at their instructional level. The student's performance in this subtest reveals the student's independent, instructional, and frustrational levels of reading. It also indicates strengths and weaknesses in all of the subtests mentioned earlier in this topic.

On the pre-primer level (kindergarten), David read with 97% accuracy. On the Primer level (late kindergarten, early first grade); David was able to read with 95% accuracy, 70 words per minute, and 100% on comprehension. On the late first grade reading, he read with 87% accuracy (the minimum for instructional is

95%), 51 WPM was his rate, but he was able to answer all of the comprehension questions correctly. The reason for the comprehension may have been because he has read this story before. Therefore, I put David instructional at the Primer level and frustrational at the late first grade level (1-2). One of his weaknesses is his fluency, but because of his automatic word call his fluency is affected. On the primer passage, “Clouds”, David’s errors are self-corrected. He does have to have help with the words castle and cried. He doesn’t see these words as often and therefore he doesn’t automatically know them. When it came to the “Ice Cream” passage, the first word is One and David starts the passage with “On a”. This error counts as two. He used on instead of one and he added an a after on. I noticed that when he started to get frustrated, he would miss more words even if they were simple. For example, he said sit instead of sat. That could also come back to the spelling assessment, where I realized that he was still missing short vowel or using the wrong short vowel letters in his spelling words. He would replace A with I. He did however self correct himself 4 different times but that still counts as errors because he didn’t initially read the words correctly.

Listening Comprehension

This subtest is given to see if a child can understand the text if it is being read to them. The student listens to a text and then answers some comprehension questions. With David, I started out reading a 3rd grade passage. He was able to answer the questions with 90% on the second grade passage and that was with his reading being frustrational so I decided to start on the 3rd grade passage. He did very well. He was able to answer all of the comprehension questions so I moved on to a 4th grade passage. It was a much harder passage with more vocabulary words and David was still able to answer 5 out of the 6 questions correctly. I would have predicted that he would have a hard time remembering the 4th grade passage just because of the vocabulary and not knowing what it means. I decided to move on to a fifth grade passage. With the 5th grade passage, David was only able to answer 33% of the comprehension questions correctly. This is probably due to the extra information that was read to him and the unknown vocabulary words. There were a lot more details and actions going on in this story which could confuse the one that is listening to the story. Being that David was able to understand up to a 4th grade level while I was reading it to him, it tells me that he comprehends a lot more when a story is read to him, which makes sense. He is not focusing so much on the words and he doesn’t lose the information because of his accuracy and rate.

Instructional Implications

Reading

For David, his independent reading level is the primer level, instructional is 1-1, and his frustration reading level is end of first grade/beginning of second grade. He was placed at these levels because his score dropped drastically on his flashed word recognition from the primer level to the late first grade level. It went from 90% to 65%. His word recognition in context at the same levels went from 95 to 87 and his rate was 70 and dropped to 51. His spelling at the late first grade level was 20%.

For David’s reading instruction, he would benefit from a variety of reading materials on his instructional level and independent level. He needs stories that are of interest to him that he can actually read. Finding books that are on a first grade level but would interest a 3rd grade boy. He also needs texts that appeal to him that are at his instructional level so he can make progress. This level would be at the end of 1st grade. For the guided reading instruction David could benefit from narrative texts and informational texts on his instructional level. I do feel that some repeated readings would allow David to become a better reader. His instructional level is at the end of 1st grade so therefore, some repeated readings, until he reaches instructional

level at the beginning of second grade would be beneficial for David. Completing DRTA's with David would help David with his comprehension. Making sure to stop at important parts of the story and ask what he thinks will happen next and how does he know that will help him understand the story by making predictions and providing evidence for his prediction. We don't want to teach David how to think, but we do want to guide him on how to make sense of the texts he will read throughout his life. I would also take about 4 minutes a day and practice fluency with David. He would read the same selection 2-3 times and work on getting faster each time. Timing him for two minutes each time should show progress.

Word Study

In word study, I would review short vowel patterns with David to make sure he fully understands them and can distinguish between each short vowel sound. If it is noticeable that he is making progress with this task, I would move him on to One-syllable word patterns. For example; CVC words like bed, cup, mat, fit, log that are non-rhyming. "Many poor readers do not internalize the foundational short-vowel patterns in first and second grade, which can later lead to serious problems with word recognition."(Morris, 2014)

Once David has gained enough knowledge about the one-syllable patterns with short vowels, he can move on to long vowel, r-controlled patterns and so on. With these sorts you are letting the student figure out which word best fits in a specific sort. I would start David out with the two short vowel sounds he confuses the most when spelling. These are e and i. He hears the short I sound and because of the mouth position when the short I sound is being said, he wants to put a short e sound. Therefore, I would review these first and put them in a sort together. When this sort is completed and he is ready to move on, I would review the other short vowel patterns to check for understanding. Choose at least 15 words that fit the patterns you are sorting. Let him chose the headers and go through each word himself. He is to place the word in the column he thinks it belongs. After he places it in the column, he needs to read each word in that column. If he is correct, move on to the next word. If he places the word in the wrong column have him repeat the words in the column and see if they sound the same of if they don't. The teachers goal is to guide him, not to give him the answers. There are many games that David can play to help him with word sorting. Speed sorting and Bingo are games that young children love to play. After spending a few days on the sorts and games, a spelling test needs to be taken to check for understanding. If spelling test shows mastery, move on to the next sort. If David doesn't show that he understands, go back and review what needs to be taught again. The reason for word sorts for David is so that he can internalize the sorts and be able to read other words with the same patterns when he comes across them in his reading.

Being Read To

For David, this is important because he needs to be exposed to rich vocabulary. I would read texts that are on a 3rd grade or 4th grade reading level to David. Listening to someone read higher level texts exposes the students to language that isn't being used in their reading leveled texts. Stopping points during reading are beneficial because it allows the teacher to check for understanding. If the student doesn't understand the text when being read to, the teacher needs to decide what level is best for the child. For David his listening comprehension, on a 3rd grade book, was 100%. For 4th grade it was 83% but then dropped to 33% on a 5th grade passage.

Warriors Don't Cry Unit Lesson

Desired Outcomes

| Priority Standards: | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| AH2.H.4.1 | Analyze the political issues and conflicts that impacted the United States since Reconstruction and the compromises that resulted (e.g., Populism, Progressivism, working conditions and labor unrest, New Deal, Wilmington Race Riots, Eugenics, Civil Rights Movement, Anti-War protests, Watergate, etc.). | | | | |
| AH2.H.5.2 | Explain how judicial, legislative and executive actions have affected the distribution of power between levels of government since Reconstruction (e.g., New Deal, Great Society, Civil Rights, etc.). | | | | |
| <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Understandings: Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual's choice to act as an ally, bystander, or perpetrator impacts individuals, their community and whole nations. • Authors make choices that will best convey their experience to the reader; this is especially true in the genre of memoir </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Essential Questions:</p> <p>What can we do alone and with others to confront injustices, like racism?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we, as individuals and citizens, make a positive difference in our school, community, and nation? • How do we choose to tell our own story? How do our decisions to include or exclude certain elements impact the story we tell? </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Students will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical timeline and key personalities in Warriors Don't Cry • the events leading up to, the outcome and the impact of the Brown v. Board Supreme Court ruling </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read a text and identifying key events as they occur. • Use the writing process to create a personal narrative. • Create a graphic representation of their narrative, including specific and relevant events. • Discuss relevant issues using various protocols. </td> </tr> </table> | | <p>Understandings: Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual's choice to act as an ally, bystander, or perpetrator impacts individuals, their community and whole nations. • Authors make choices that will best convey their experience to the reader; this is especially true in the genre of memoir | <p>Essential Questions:</p> <p>What can we do alone and with others to confront injustices, like racism?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we, as individuals and citizens, make a positive difference in our school, community, and nation? • How do we choose to tell our own story? How do our decisions to include or exclude certain elements impact the story we tell? | <p>Students will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical timeline and key personalities in Warriors Don't Cry • the events leading up to, the outcome and the impact of the Brown v. Board Supreme Court ruling | <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read a text and identifying key events as they occur. • Use the writing process to create a personal narrative. • Create a graphic representation of their narrative, including specific and relevant events. • Discuss relevant issues using various protocols. |
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Warriors Don't Cry Study Guide

Directions: The following prompts are intended to guide your reading of Warriors Don't Cry. Use them to remember important scenes as we discuss the text in class. Work on the study guide does not substitute for your annotation of the book.

Chapters 1–6

1. State two examples of Melba directly or indirectly facing racism. (Literal)

2. Why does Cincinnati seem so different to Melba? (Literal)

3. List three outside forces or institutions that play a major role, good or bad, in desegregation. (Interpretive)

4. Summarize Melba’s experiences on her first attempt to enter Central High. (Literal)

5. Explain what it finally takes to get the Little Rock Nine into Central High. (Literal)

Chapters 7–11

1. Record five things that happen to Melba the first day she enters Central High School. (Literal)

a. Walking the halls

b. In homeroom

c. In gym class

d. In shorthand class

e. In the school office

2. Explain how things change at Central High once the soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division are stationed there. (Literal)

3. Describe some of the ways that Danny helps Melba. (Literal)

4. How does Melba’s relationship with Danny end? (Literal)

Chapters 12–18

1. What does Melba learn about her friends when she has a birthday party during Christmas break? (Literal)

2. Describe the chili incident and what happens to Minnijean. (Literal)

3. What is at the top of Melba’s list of New Year’s resolutions? (Literal)

4. What is Grandma India's advice? What does Melba do because of that advice? (Literal)

5. Who is Link and how does he help Melba? (Literal)

6. What does Melba learn about Link when she goes to visit his Nana Healy? (Literal) Do you think Link was really on Melba's side? (Interpretive)

7. What does Mama finally do to keep her job? (Literal) How does this compare to people's actions/thinking today? (Interpretive)

8. Where does Melba finally finish high school? (Literal)

9. Describe the ending of the book. What is your opinion about what Melba did during the year she describes in this book? (Evaluative)

10. How do you think our country would be different if the 1954 Supreme Court decision to desegregate the schools known as Brown v. Board of Education had never been made? Provide specific examples of things mentioned in Warriors Don't Cry that would have happened and things that would not have happened. Then, answer this question more generally, drawing from your own life experience as well as knowledge you have garnered from places other than school. (Evaluative)

11. How would Melba's life have been different if she had not been one of the Little Rock Nine? (Interpretive)

Photograph 1 Will Counts Assignment



Directions: Analyze the photograph closely. Then, respond to the prompts.

Observation: Describe what you see in the photograph so that someone who has not seen the photo can picture it in his or her mind. As you write, keep the following questions in mind: What people and objects do you see? How are they arranged? What other details do you see?

Knowledge: Summarize what you know about the situation and time period shown in the photograph.
Interpretation: Describe the action in the photograph. Based on your observations, what can you conclude about this event or time period?

Additional questions: What is missing or not shown in this photograph? What would you like to see? What cannot be captured in the medium of photography?

Photograph 2 Fred Blackwell Assignment



Sit-in at Lunch Counter

Directions: Analyze the photograph closely. Then, respond to the prompts.

Observation: Describe what you see in the photograph so that someone who has not seen the photo can picture it in his or her mind. As you write, keep the following questions in mind: What people and objects do you see? How are they arranged? What other details do you see?

Knowledge: Summarize what you know about the situation and time period shown in the photograph.
Interpretation: Describe the action in the photograph. Based on your observations, what can you conclude about this event or time period?

Additional questions: What is missing or not shown in this photograph? What would you like to see? What cannot be captured in the medium of photography?

Lunch Room Assignment

Directions: Your Assignment is to sit with a different group of people during your lunch period, and write about it in your journal.

Some questions to think about for your journal entry. How hard was it for you to sit with a different group of people? How did the other students treat you? Were they nice or mean? Did you feel uncomfortable? How segregated was the school lunch room?

Allegheny Literacy Project: Graphic Novel Lessons and Sample Student Work

After you read *The Scorch Trials* graphic novel, go to the following site: <http://www.toondoo.com> and create a 4 panel cartoon about a character of your choice from the book. You will need to google your character & save the image if you plan to use true representation of him/her within your cartoon. Either share or print. Then share with me your view of graphic novels vs. regular novels with a 1 page paper. Convince me as to whether I need to purchase more for our library or continue with regular type novels.

Be specific in your argument with at



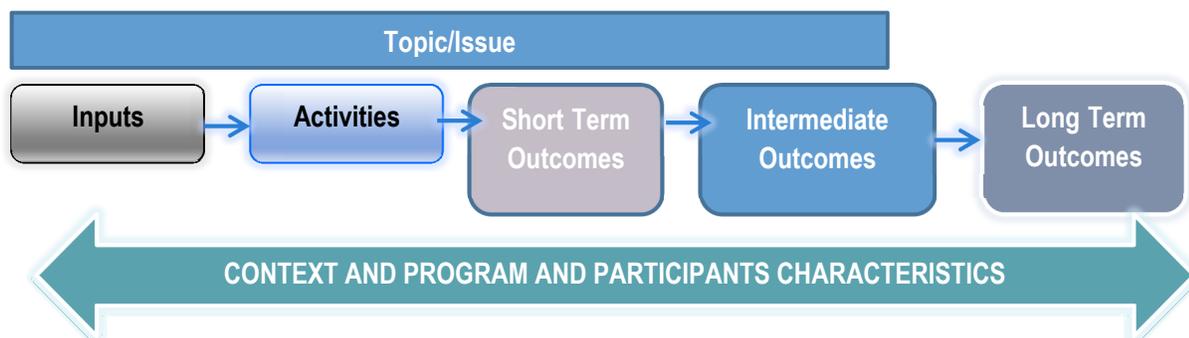
Comics or Novels?

Both novels and comics alike can be very intriguing to the reader when based on a solid, interesting story. However, one is only words, which leaves it up to the imagination to create what the reader thinks everything looks like, while the other relies on visuals to project ideas. I believe that reading novels can really involve the reader with more details and portray the smallest events very clearly. However, in my opinion, novels really have a way of showing the reader exactly what is going on and provides a stronger sense of wonder with eye-catching visuals. Pros to comics versus novels are that comics are better at assigning characters their definitions by showing their facial expressions and actions. Characters make stronger impressions in comics. I personally would choose comics over novels (at least when it comes to fictional writes). In comics, the pace changes very quickly, so they rarely ever grow boring. Sometimes novels can move slowly and bore the reader. Another pro is that comics are not always very wordy, so people who are not so good at reading can have the experience of enjoying a book without being held back. A pro concerning novels is that they tend to be longer which requires the reader to spend more time reading them, which in turn leads to the reader becoming more attached to the story, which is always a wonderful experience. This leads to the pro the comics are shorter and can be read using less time, unless you're reading a whole series of course. Leading to the conclusion of the pros and cons over comics and novels, I think that more comics included in the collection would be more valuable and exciting over regular novels.

C2C Program Evaluation Design

MN Associates, Inc. (MNA) is conducting the external evaluation of the C2C project using a theory-based approach to study program design. This orientation applies a systematic process for defining what an educational innovation or intervention (e.g., the C2C project) is expected to do, in order to achieve desired teaching and learning outcomes and the process by which those impacts are realized (Chen, 1990, 2005; McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999). Program design and implementation is based on assumptions—explicit or otherwise—held by program designers and stakeholders about how specific actions were expected to mitigate an identified problem. Chen (2005) defines program theory as being simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive, with a resulting focus on identifying action-oriented explanations of program assumptions, inputs/processes, and activities. See Figure 19 below.

Figure 19: Standard Theory of Action



In MNA’s experience, theory-based evaluation is better able to: (a) assess impact both holistically and as influenced by separate program elements; (b) provide feedback for ongoing program improvement; and (c) inform program replication and scale-up. MNA believes this conceptual position complements both the C2C project and its approach to providing thorough program evaluation services. All of MNA’s evaluations apply a collaborative evaluation approach (O’Sullivan & D’Agostino, 2002) that treats project staff and participants as partners in data collection activities, rather than as subjects of research. MNA also adhere to tenets of Patton’s (1997) utilization-focused evaluation to address how people in real-world programs experience the evaluation process and are able to put findings into practice in ways that meet their knowledge and use needs. These theories were put into practice, as MNA completed the program’s evaluation activities. Data were aggregated and no personal identifiers were used in the report. Due sampling of participants and the kinds of data available to the evaluator, findings should be considered exploratory, descriptive, and non-conclusive.

References:

- Chen, H. T. (1990). *Theory-driven evaluations*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.
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- McLaughlin, J. A., & Jordan, G. B. (1999). Logic models: A tool for telling your program's performance story. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 22(1), 65-72.
- O'Sullivan, R. G., & D'Agostino, A. F. (2002). Promoting evaluation through collaboration with community-based programs for young children and their families. *Evaluation*, 8(3), 1-16.
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Reading Education Program Focus Group Interview Protocol

Materials to bring:

- Focus Group Protocol
- Phones and iPads for audio recording
- Pre-printed name tags
- Index cards
- Business cards

General Introductions & Background:

Good afternoon! I'm Kavita Mittapalli of MN Associates, Inc., and this is my colleague Nina de las Alas. We are a woman-owned small consulting business based in Fairfax, Virginia and our clients include school districts, state departments of education, federal agencies, non-profit organizations, 2- and 4-year colleges and 4-year universities, and foundations, across the United States. We specialized in evaluation and technical assistance in STEM education, extended learning opportunities, workforce development, and teacher preparation and development.

As you may well know from Missey Weaver, MN Associates (or MNA for short) was contracted by Alleghany County to be the third-party evaluators for the literacy grant. We greatly appreciated your taking the time from your busy schedules to speak with us about your experiences with the grant. We are also pleased and grateful that Ashley Pennell could join us as well. She's here to observe and participate.

First, about this afternoon's focus group session—Again, we appreciate your input and want to ensure that you could be as candid as you feel able or comfortable to do. We will audio record today's conversations, but only for data collection purposes. When we report out, we will do so anonymously, and we keep things confidential. Are you OK with that? [Wait for and get confirmation—verbal and/or non-verbal]

Second, so that we can get as much of your stories and experiences as possible with the time we have, we are going to divide into two groups. So if we can, let's get into two groups, one will go with Nina, and the other will go with Kavita. [Followed by logistics of dividing into 2 groups].

Focus Group Introductions: Going around the table, let's introduce ourselves by providing our names, the school and grades we teach, and # of years of teaching experience we have. And I'm [Kavita or Nina].

Classroom Practices in Reading/Literacy:

- 1) Give us a brief description of your class (# of students, demographics, reading ability range).
 - a. Do you also get migrant students in your class? When and how many?
 - b. Do you get returning migrant students (i.e., you recognize them from a previous season or academic period)?
- 2) How do you know your students' reading levels?
 - a. What do you use to assess your students' reading/literacy abilities?
 - b. How do you use the reading assessment inventory you were trained in through App State on your students?
 - c. At the start of this school year—SY 2016-17, what did you do to determine reading/literacy levels of all of your students?
- 3) If you teach the lower elementary grades (Pre-K, Kindergarten, Grade 1),
 - a. ..How do you teach letters and words?
 - b. ..How do you teach spelling patterns and sentence structures?
 - c. ..How do you incorporate read aloud into your instruction?
- 4) For all grades,
 - a. ..What does writing instruction look like in your classroom?
 - b. ..What does reading instruction look like in your classroom?
- 5) What kinds of materials or resources do you use in your instruction? If you can, please be specific as to how you use these materials and resources in terms of strategy, intervention, and/or student need. For example, do you use Letterland Phonics? If so, how, with which students?
- 6) What types of reading materials do you send home with your students?

Changes to Instructional Practices:

- 7) In what ways has your instructional practices changed as a result of the being part of the reading specialist licensure program?
 - a. You received considerable training in the Morris Informal Reading Inventory. How are you using the training you received on the reading assessment tool in your classroom? Describe.
 - i. Have you changed the way you approach formatively assess and differentiate instruction and/or support to the students? If so, please elaborate.
 - ii. Has there been an occasion in which you determined that a student needed even more specialized and intensive diagnosis and intervention? If so, please elaborate.
 - b. You have also had seminars that dealt with sociological and cultural topics. To what extent discussions and reflections resonated and have applications in your classrooms?

Beyond the Classroom: Teacher Collaboration and Extended Learning Opportunities

- 8) Have you had opportunities to share instructional practices and strategies with other teachers in school? If so, how?
 - a. Does the collaboration involve same grade teachers or across grades (by subject area/topic)?
 - b. Is this a new development since you began the Reading Specialist program work or was this ongoing before?
 - c. Have colleagues and school leaders looked to you or approached you differently since being part of the Reading Specialist program?
- 9) Did you engage in summer literacy camps that were funded by this grant (C2C) in your school in 2015 and/or in 2016? If so, please elaborate.

Special Student Populations:

- 10) Do you teach migrant students? Students with disabilities (with emotional, physical, and/or developmentally delayed needs)? Students with limited English proficiency? Other special status?
- 11) How do you teach reading and writing to these special populations? Be specific as needed.

Parents:

- 12) How do you involve the parents in supporting their students and reading/literacy abilities?
 - a. What are you communicating to them in terms of strategies, tips, activities and book recommendations?
 - b. How receptive are the parents to your advice and recommendations?
- 13) Are you seeing changes in the way parents and their students are engaging in literacy? If so, how? Please provide examples.

Data Asks: We would like to see how you have incorporated what you have learned thus far from the Reading Specialist program into your teaching and ask for your help in providing us with some artifacts about that.

We ask that you provide us with the following samples via email (or if necessary by postal mail):

- Sample lesson plans or units as enacted during the SY 2015-16 and SY 2016-17 that cover over several days. If providing discrete one-day lessons, please show a sample at the beginning, middle and end of the school year.

- A range of samples of student work (struggling, at grade level, above grade level) relating to the lesson/unit (To protect students' privacy, please replace name with initials, and provide gender and grade level (pre-K, K, Grade 1, etc.)
- End-of-course grades per course completed through App State
- Assessment or excerpted assessment (DIBELS, Morris, Informal Reading Inventory, etc.)⁷ and accompanying summary of reading assessment of an assessed student
- Case summary report completed for the practicum and completed in May 2016 (Again, as with student samples, please replace name with initials, and provide gender and grade level (pre-K, K, Grade 1, etc.)

Closing:

- 14) In another year or two, what things would they like to do with the project?
- 15) Where do you see yourselves professionally in 5 years?
- 16) Please provide three words to describe your Reading Specialist Program so far (to write down on index cards provided).

⁷ For other assessment or inventories, see <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/critical-analysis-eight-informal-reading-inventories>

High School Literacy Project Coordinator Interview Questions

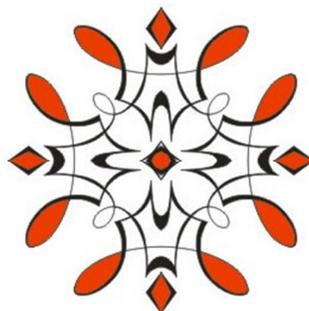
1. How did the High School Literacy Project begin with the four participants? What precipitated the formation and funding of the annual workshop and related activities, resources, and events?
2. How were the focus strategies chosen? (Example: why work on graphic novels this past summer?)
3. Besides the Blog, do you have any workshop documents to share, e.g., agenda, syllabus, etc.?
4. What have you been collecting from the participants? According to the blog, lesson units, and revised lesson units after implementation. Is there anything else you have collected or reviewed?
5. What have you observed to be working/not working, happening/not happening in the teachers' instruction and in the classrooms?
6. Among the exchanges you have with participants, what indicators were you looking for to show gained knowledge, changed practices, and/or changed dispositions?
7. How do you know that the project's goals (see above) are being met? What defines success for the HS Alleghany Literacy Project?
8. From your perspective, what worked well with the HS project?
9. What issues presented hurdles to the successful implementation of the HS project?
10. What are areas of improvement for the HS project?
11. What are the perceived impacts of the HS project? In what way are the HS project literacy strategies impacting student learning?
12. What is next for these teachers? Are there subsequent plans to support the teachers after the grant ends, or perhaps work with another cohort of teachers?

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all C2C (USDE award # S215G140012) program staff and participants who have shared valuable information and have taken time out of their very busy schedules to complete the survey, engage in formal and informal discussions, and share pertinent program information.

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Kavita Mittapalli, Ph.D.
Nina de las Alas

MN Associates, Inc.
www.mnassociatesinc.com

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