

Does Participation in Guided Reading Plus (GRP) or Intermediate Guided Reading Plus (iGRP) Graduate Courses Positively Impact Literacy Outcomes for Students? *Likely. Evidence Suggests Professional Learning Leads to Higher Literacy Scores.*

Primary limitation: GRP/iGRP teachers self-select into the graduate courses examined in this study. These teachers may be more effective teachers than the average DPS teacher, potentially impacting observed student growth. Control variables were only used to match student factors, while teacher factors (i.e., effectiveness, years teaching, etc.) were not.

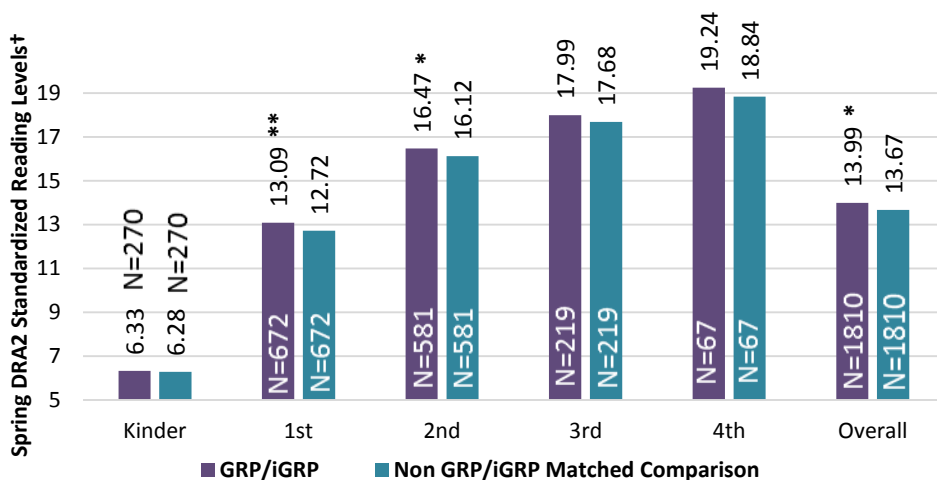
Background: GRP/ iGRP is considered best practice for early literacy instruction and is taught in literacy blocks throughout the district as an alternative to Guided Reading instruction¹. To better prepare teachers, the district developed a program in which teachers receive certificated graduate course credit for taking 2 years of three intensive courses in GRP or iGRP.

Outcomes: Compared to their counterparts with similar backgrounds, students who received literacy instruction from a teacher participating in the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd GRP/iGRP graduate courses performed better in literacy.

Recommendations:

- Teachers should consider participating in the GRP/iGRP graduate courses.
- School leaders should utilize the expertise of graduates of these courses at the school level.

Literacy Scores for Students of GRP/iGRP Teachers and Non GRP/iGRP Matched Comparison Students



† Literacy scores were rescaled to reflect an interval progression rather than ordinal progression

Why Small Differences Matter:

Small differences are observed due to the limitations of the available data, and the phased process of professional development research (teacher practice shifts and fidelity of implementation take place *before* student impact shifts); however, these findings notably challenge the landmark TNTP-Mirage study which found most PDs have no impact². First and second grade GRP/iGRP students in particular performed significantly higher in literacy than their matched counterparts.

*indicates marginal statistical significance at the p<.1 level;
** indicates statistical significance at the p<.05 level

Course Information:

- GRP/iGRP Courses are offered for teachers who teach grades K-5.
- Teachers can earn graduate course credits from Adams State and University of Colorado-Denver for course completion.
- Contact Margaret Clark, Elementary Literacy Specialist (Margaret_Clark@dpsk12.org) for more information.

METHODOLOGY

Students of GRP/iGRP teachers were compared to a matched comparison group of students in the district using propensity score matching. Matches were found for 1,810 of the 1,998 students of course teachers. Students were matched on a number of control variables including: pre-score on the DRA2, race/ethnicity, Free and Reduced Lunch status, English Language Learner status, gender, SPF rating, and grade level. Additional study limitations: 1) all literacy students of GRP/iGRP teacher participants were included in the analyses rather than confining analyses to a list of students with whom teachers actually used GRP/iGRP, 2) only students tested in English were included in analyses, 3) kindergarteners' pre-scores were collected in the mid-year rather than Fall which limited the window to capture growth, & 4) fifth grade students were excluded from analyses due to low numbers.