

NATIONAL
ACADEMY
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EDUCATION

READING INSTRUCTION IN THE COVID-19 ERA

September 9, 2020

National Academy of Education

**COVID-19 and Inequities in Education
Forum Series**



National Academy of Education COVID-19 and Inequities in Education Forum Series

Reading Instruction in the COVID-19 Era



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Reading Instruction in the Covid-19 Era

The National Academy of Education Forum
September 9, 2020

Deborah Cromer

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- Immediate Past President,
Wisconsin State Reading Association

- Teacher for over 40 years, most of them
as a reading specialist/reading teacher
in rural/small towns schools



Sources of Inequities

- Poverty
- Childhood trauma
- Lack of understanding of human variation/ deficit lens
- Racism
- Sexism
- Ableism
- Lack of/limited access to technology/internet
- Social isolation in and out of school
- Lack of access to expert teachers



Schools and Classrooms as Intellectual Communities

- Think and learn together
- Apply our literacies to read our worlds, compose our lives, realize our humanity
- Read and write for meaningful purposes and audiences
- Read and write to identify and work to solve problems
- Read and write to do important work in the world
- Have trusted adults and peers who pay attention to and respond to our thinking
- Have opportunities to discover our strengths and interests (individual and collective) and build upon them to address our needs, whatever those needs may be.



Opportunity gaps

- Gaps existed before the pandemic.
- There have been schools and classrooms in which students and teachers have not been engaged as members of intellectual communities.
- Many students have been seen through a deficit lens rather than as resources in their own learning.



Welcomed and Productive Change, or

“ . . . a welcomed and productive change, or a roadmap to disaster.”

(Peter Johnston in Ford et al., 2014)



Reaping the Rewards of Reading for Understanding

From the executive summary:

We witness the most impressive effects when we see strong and supportive professional learning communities that hold high standards and provide continuous support, in the form of coaching and careful monitoring, to help teachers acquire practices that promote the widest student engagement in higher-order talk within intentionally collaborative discussions about interesting and thought-provoking texts—all moving toward a target of applying what students learn in such a process to some issue, problem, or project worth addressing. (Pearson et al., 2020)



Reaping the Rewards of Reading for Understanding

Conclusion of executive summary:

The Reading For Understanding Initiative taught us about how much it takes to achieve even small effects for increases in student reading comprehension performance. It is a matter of commitment and sustenance. (Pearson et al., 2020)



Various ways school is beginning Fall 2020

- School-based virtual learning programs
- State/regional virtual learning programs
- Face-to-face instruction
- Hybrid instruction
- Synchronous versus asynchronous instruction
- Private learning pods
- Online tutoring services



What Parents Want

- Facilitate student discussion
- Develop authentic learning experiences
- Proactively communicate and engage with students and families
- Communicate clear expectations and demonstrations
- Offer voice and choice within structure

(Renwick, 2020)



Student voices

- **What's really of great concern to me is the complete absence of young people's voices in this conversation. I have yet to see a compelling survey that has asked children: *How do you feel?***

(Vikram Patel, Interview with Lisa Ling)



Some possibilities

- Notice and name what students have been learning during the pandemic
- Keep track of what they are wondering about, what they want and need to learn in order to cope with this changing world
- Ask what we think teachers need to learn during this time of uncertainty
- Conduct an inquiry into how school has changed
- Conduct an inquiry into how the community has changed



Deep Learning to Find Our Place

The need for change and the opportunity to take action are converging. The old system works for only a minority, and those who succeed . . . are not all that well off either when it comes to living in increasingly complex times. What's interesting is that the new set of crises is forcing humankind to reconsider its relationship to each other and to the planet and universe. The circumstances that now face us represent a unique configuration of challenges that make it essential that we proactively change the world through learning. . . . Deep learning then is about finding our place in a complex, indeed scary world. It is about transforming our reality through learning, both individually and collectively. (Fullan, et al.,2017)



Resources

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Thank you.

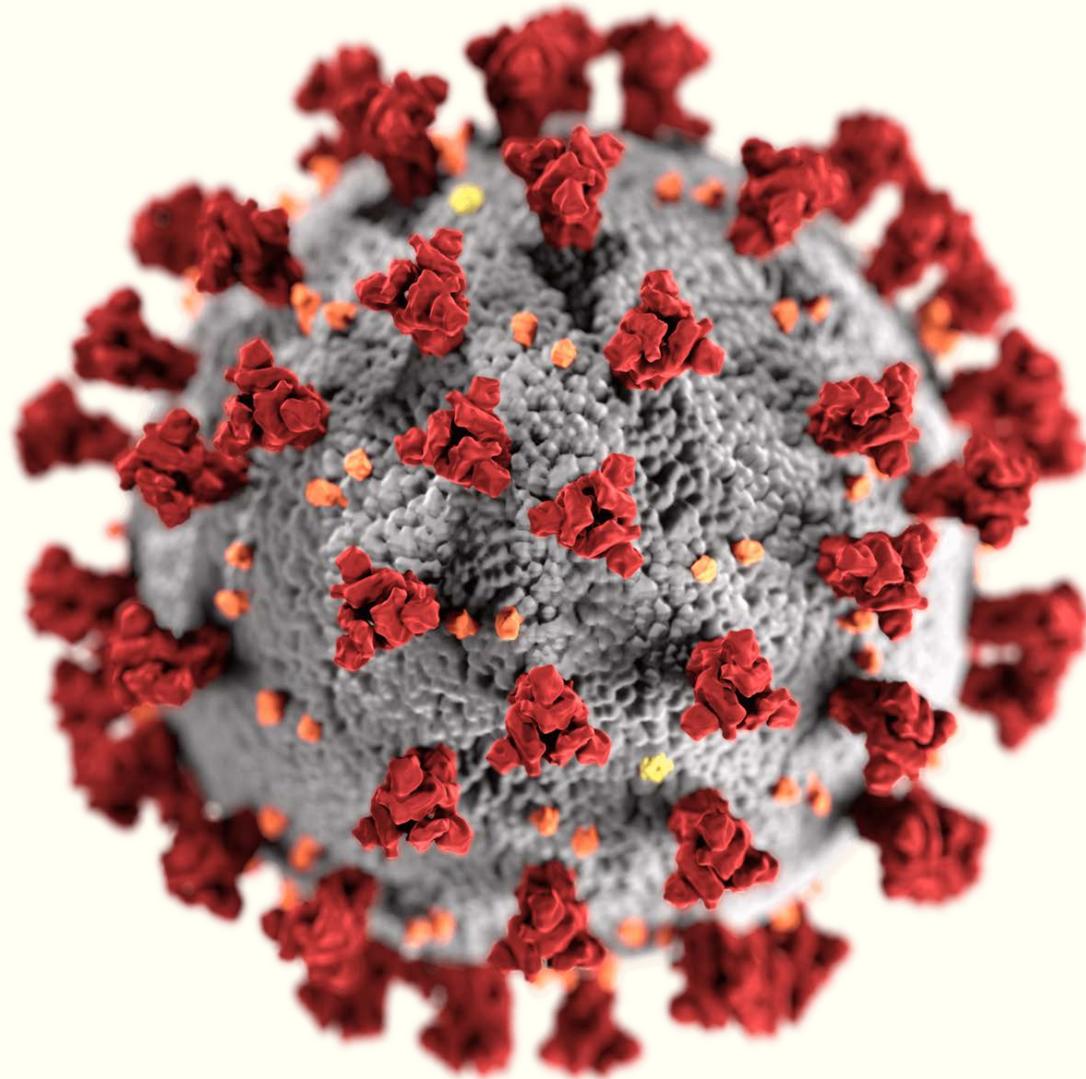


COVID-19: INEQUITIES IN READING INSTRUCTION

Dr. Robin C. Hall, Director of English Language Arts and Literacy
Council of the Great City Schools



Education 2020: Schooling while Navigating the New Frontier of COVID-19



Challenges with Reading Instruction During a Pandemic

- Inequities in reading instruction and grade level literacy attainment
- Misconceptions about addressing unfinished curricular learning in reading instruction
- Implications for approaching grade-level learning moving forward

Inequities in reading instruction and grade level literacy attainment

- Access to home-based learning environments that are conducive to learning
- Access to a guide -by -the -side
- Access to sustained provision digital devices and internet service
- Access to appropriate reading materials—for instruction, independent reading, and reading for pleasure
- Access to differentiated instructional support in “real time”

Inequities in reading instruction and grade level literacy attainment

- Access to opportunities for engaging with texts and grappling with concepts and ideas through sustained academic discourse
- Access to a range of texts for building knowledge and academic vocabulary with appropriate scaffolding
- Access to stimuli that fosters critical thinking and student-driven lines of inquiry and research
- Access to opportunities to produce writing that demonstrates understanding of the knowledge, ideas, and or concepts conveyed in a text
- Access to opportunities for extended learning by incorporating experiences beyond the virtual classroom

Misconceptions about Addressing Unfinished Learning in Reading

What is *Unfinished Learning*?

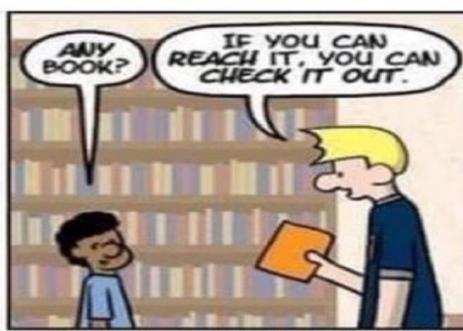
- Gaps in understanding, misconceptions, under-developed understandings that hinder a student's ability to fully engage with grade-level content or course

Misconceptions about Addressing Unfinished Learning in Reading

- Addressing skill gaps, incomplete learning, and misconceptions in reading is a necessary and natural part of the teaching (and learning) process
 - It is one with which educators have traditionally struggled, especially in early literacy instruction
- Addressing unfinished learning typically leads to remediation or pull-out interventions that further isolate students and impede their access to rigorous, engaging grade-level content
 - This includes use of leveled texts, pull-out remedial instruction during grade level reading instruction, and other intervention programs that lead to further opportunity gaps
- Accelerating student unfinished learning rather than remediation of student learning
- Approaching unfinished learning in a constructive, asset-based manner reflects the districts long-term commitment to educational equity and excellence



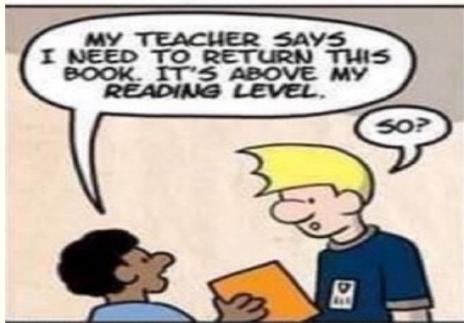
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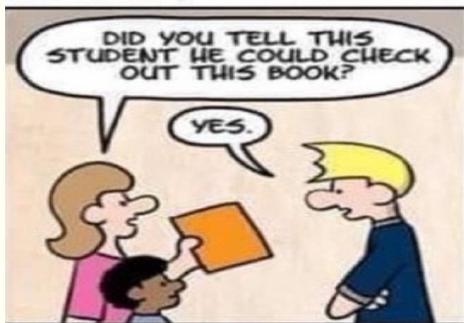
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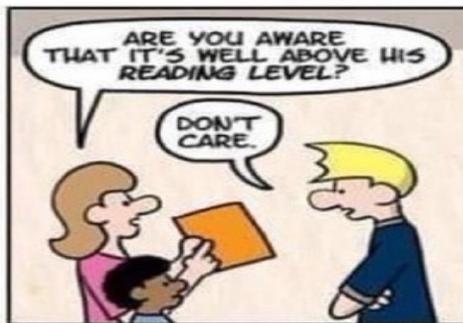
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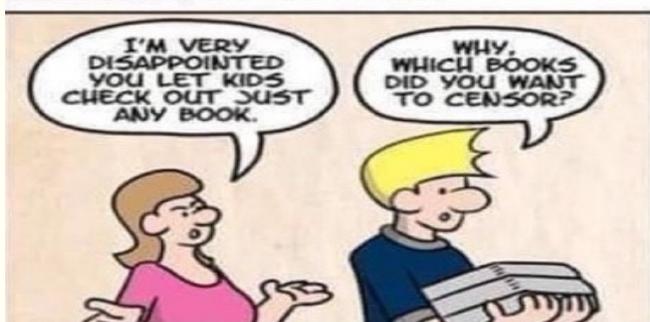
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Implications for Approaching Grade-Level Learning

Addressing Unfinished Learning: Six Overarching Principles

- Stick to grade-level content and instructional rigor
- Focus on the depth of instruction, rather than the pace.
- Prioritize content and learning
- Maintain the inclusion of each and every learner
- Identify and address gaps in learning through instruction, avoiding the misuse of standardized testing to place kids into high or low ability groups or provide low levels of instructional rigor to lower performing students.
- Focus on the commonalities that students share in this time of crisis, not just on their differences
Focus on the depth of instruction, rather than the pace

Stick to grade-level content and instructional rigor

- Address learning gaps as needed within the content of grade-level work
- Re-engage prior knowledge in the context of grade-level assignments
 - This adds up over time, resulting in more functional learning than resorting to watered down instruction or reteaching concepts out of context

Focus on the Depth of Instruction, Rather than the Pace

- Remain focused on the learning that could and should be happening
- Do not rush to cover all the gaps from last school year
- *Just in time* learning versus *Just in case* learning
- Provide patient, in-depth instruction to allow issues related to unfinished learning to arise naturally when dealing with new content, allowing for just in time instruction and reengagement of students in the context of grade-level work.

Prioritize content and learning

- Articulate the district's instructional priorities for schools and teachers
- Identify what is most important to teach within the major curricular domains for each grade level, what to cut and why, and where teachers can teach only to awareness level to save time for priorities

Ensure inclusion of each and every learner

- Some students have been disproportionately affected by school closures and switch to distance learning
- Students with disabilities who have access to grade-level content
- ELLs, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, foster children, homeless youth, and marginalized students
- Strong predictor of academic growth

Identify and address gaps in learning through instruction, avoiding the misuse of standardized testing

- Thermometer analogy
- Use strong embedded formative assessments (questions, tasks, texts)
- Provide scaffolds and additional supports to address unfinished learning
- Overgeneralizations from assessments
 - Confusing scale scores with student's capacity to learn
 - Deficit thinking – high vs low groups

Capitalize on commonalities, not differences

- Shared learning experience during this time
- Build background knowledge from these shared experiences
- Common experience that works across subject areas

“Intuitively we all like to seek the things that are comfortable rather than uncomfortable. But I do think there is a way of saying that if I believe in justice and I believe that justice is a constant struggle, and if I want to create justice, then I have to get comfortable with struggle.”

-Bryan Stevenson

Learning to read despite COVID

Catherine Snow

Harvard Graduate School of Education

NAEd Panel, 9 September 2020



Concessions/confessions

- There is not a lot of research evidence directly relevant to either online or missed/postponed learning for literacy
- Social and mental health issues almost certainly need prior attention.



Some big, literacy-specific
issues to think about



Issues

- Different developmental epochs: the tasks of teaching/learning literacy skills are very different in nature in Grades K-2, Grades 3-4, and Grades 5-12.
- Within-classroom heterogeneity: especially in Grades K-2, differences across students in reading level and access to parental support can be huge.
- Learning trajectories: some skills are acquired in a sequence because of the nature of the task, but some skills are prerequisites to other skills. The prerequisite skills need special attention.
- Teaching vs. learning: literacy skills need to be grasped AND mastered. Teachers may be crucial for ensuring grasping, but students develop mastery through practice.



Developmental epochs

Epoch	Task
Birth-onset of conventional literacy	Develop language, familiarity with print, understanding of books and their appeal
K-2 nd grade	Grasp and master the alphabetic principle
Grades 3-5	Develop automaticity, fluency, vocabulary, familiarity with various topics through reading
Grades 5-8	Develop content knowledge, appreciation for literature, understanding of self and others through reading
Grades 8-16	Grasp and master disciplinary-specific literacy skills, including reading critically, comparatively, analytically, integratively



Prerequisites and sequelae

Prerequisite	Sequelae
Broad vocabulary	High-quality lexical representations, phonological awareness, morphological awareness
Alphabetic principle	Ease and automaticity when reading, exposure to lots of text, inferring word meaning from text
General knowledge	Comprehension of text, expansion of conceptual structures through reading
Academic language	Comprehension of later grades texts, writing
Critical thinking	Reading critically, comparatively, analytically, integratively



Heterogeneity

Epoch	Task
Birth-onset of conventional literacy	Develop language, familiarity with print, understanding of books, ability to appeal
K-2 nd grade	Grasp and master disciplinary-specific literacy skills, including understanding of basic arithmetic principle
Grades 3-5	Develop automaticity, fluency, familiarity with various topics through reading
Grades 5-8	Develop content knowledge, appreciation of literature, understanding of self and others through reading
Grades 8-16	Grasp and master disciplinary-specific literacy skills, including reading critically, comparatively, analytically, integratively

Any 'epoch-specific' skill can appear in a classroom at any grade level



Teaching vs. learning

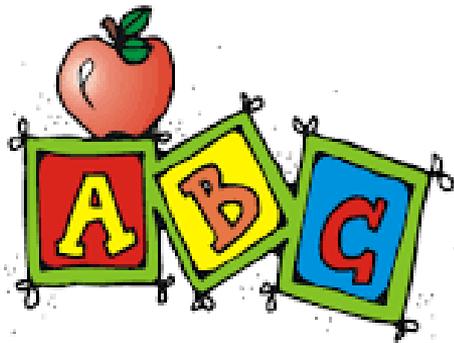
Grasp	Master
Skilled teaching of the alphabetic principle	Lots of practice reading to achieve automaticity in connecting phonemes to graphemes
Skilled teaching of academic language forms, including vocabulary	Lots of exposure to those forms through reading
Guidance about making good arguments	Lots of practice engaging in topic-oriented discussion
Text structures needed for writing	Authentic tasks that generate a need to master writing through practice
Guidance about the differences across disciplines in text structures, argument structures, questions considered	Lots of opportunity for authentic engagement in disciplinary tasks



We need to support ALL SORTS of literacy-relevant skills

CONSTRAINED SKILLS

- Small problem spaces
- Mastery is achievable
- Can be directly taught
- Can be easily assessed
- Progress is visible



UNCONSTRAINED SKILLS

- Large problem spaces
- No clear end point
- Cannot be directly taught
- Cannot be easily assessed
- Progress may be slow and unsteady
- Require a lot of time and practice





A few hypotheses to test

- Distance teaching will exacerbate social class differences in literacy achievement.
- The exacerbation effect will be strongest for grades 1-2 and 7-8.
- Students with grade-level reading skills in grades 1-2 will not show negative effects
- Parental involvement will diminish negative effects on students in all grades, especially grades K-5.
- Very good and avid readers will make greater progress in vocabulary, knowledge acquisition during periods of no/remote schooling than would be expected during normal schooling



Useful Resources

For PreK to 2nd grade

- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KgHj5HCXvbGODhSt37WFLc1ruGNoMseY/view>

For 4th-8th grade

- <https://www.serp.link/>
- <https://www.serp.link/wordgen-elementary/4th-grade>
- <https://www.serp.link/wordgen-elementary/5th-grade>
- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BIGUpKauHzeKREn1dcqkLFvpLZi72s1l_7AgiCotkaw/copy

For struggling readers in 6th-9th grades

- <https://www.serp.link/stari/1-1>
- <https://www.serp.institute.org/stari/remote-learning-resources>



Thank you!
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Bilingual Learners in the Midst of COVID-19: Leveraging Strengths to Mitigate Learning Loss

Gigi Luk

McGill University

NAEd Public Forum • September 9, 2020

Total Cases

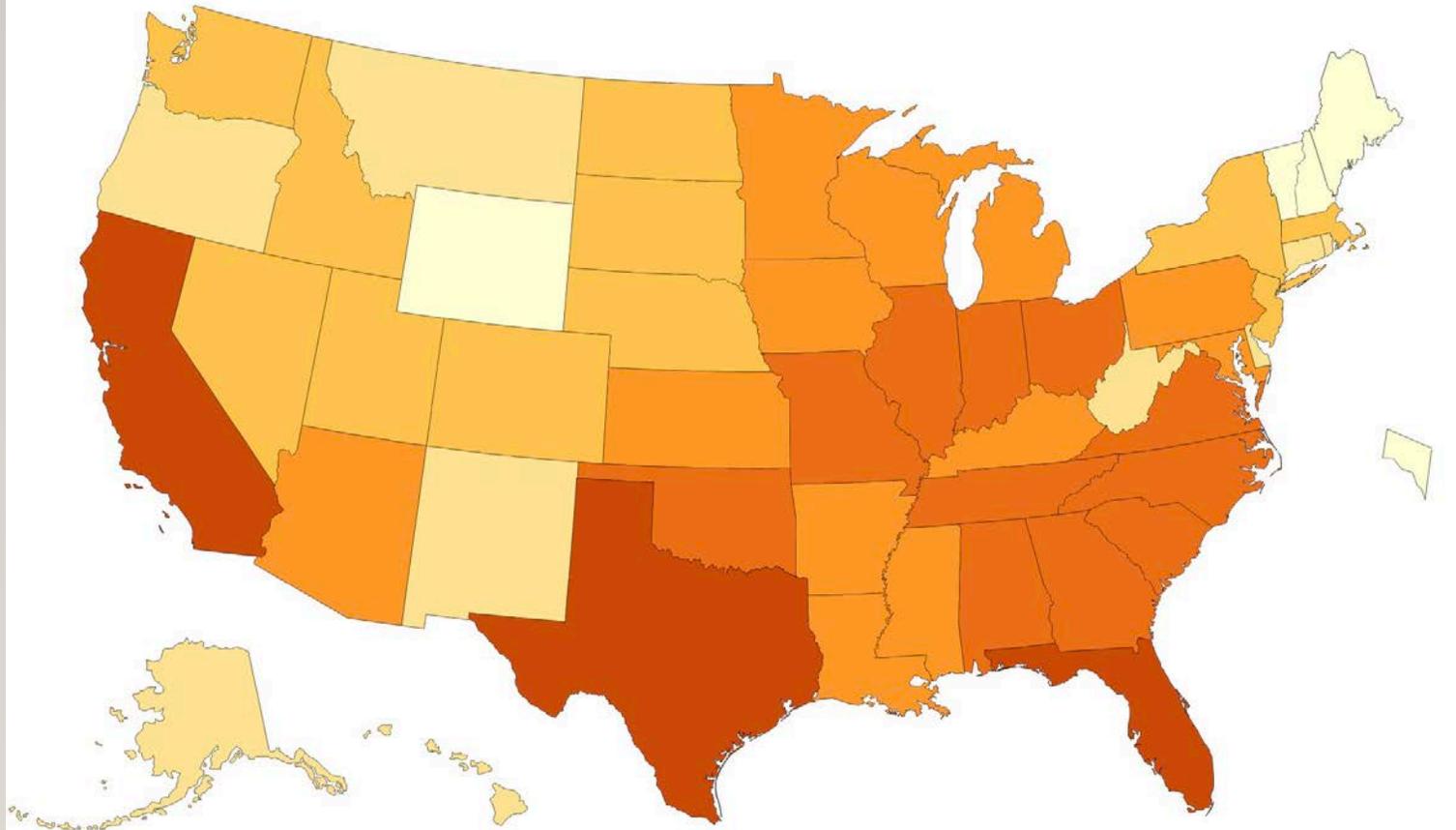
Cases in Last 7 Days

Cases per 100,000

Total Deaths

Deaths per 100,000

US COVID-19 Cases Reported to the CDC in the Last 7 Days, by State/Territory



Territories

- AS
- FSM
- GU
- MP
- PR
- PW
- RMI
- VI

Cases in Last 7 days



<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases>

Projected learning loss related to school closure due to COVID-19

mathematics

reading

Figure 1. Mathematics forecast

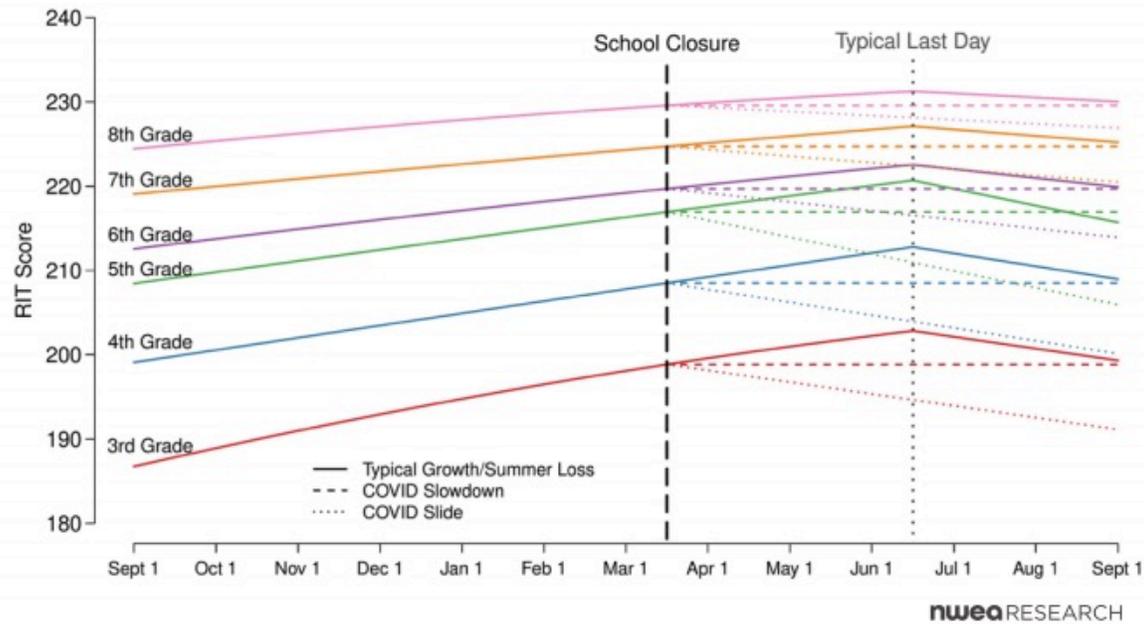
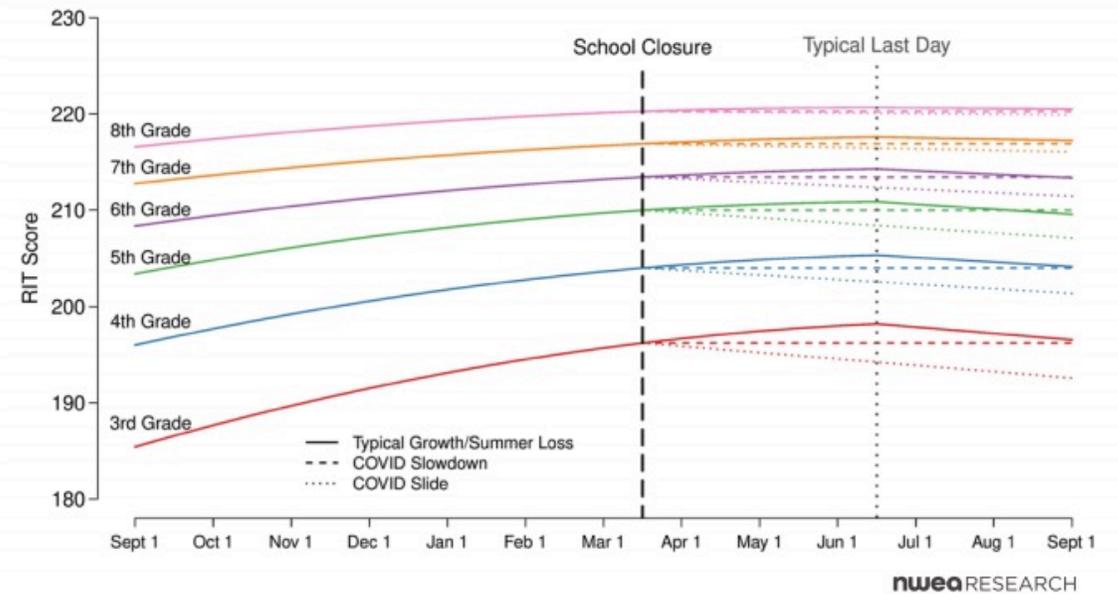


Figure 2. Reading forecast



English Learners & Learning during COVID-19

1. English proficiency is confounded with economic backgrounds
 - access to instruction
2. Support for educators when instruction is delivered online in a second language (L2) of the learners
 - technical and professional support
3. Strengths of bilingual students
 - home language support

EL status and economic status

MA-DESE 2018-2019 data Econ.Dis. x Ever_EL

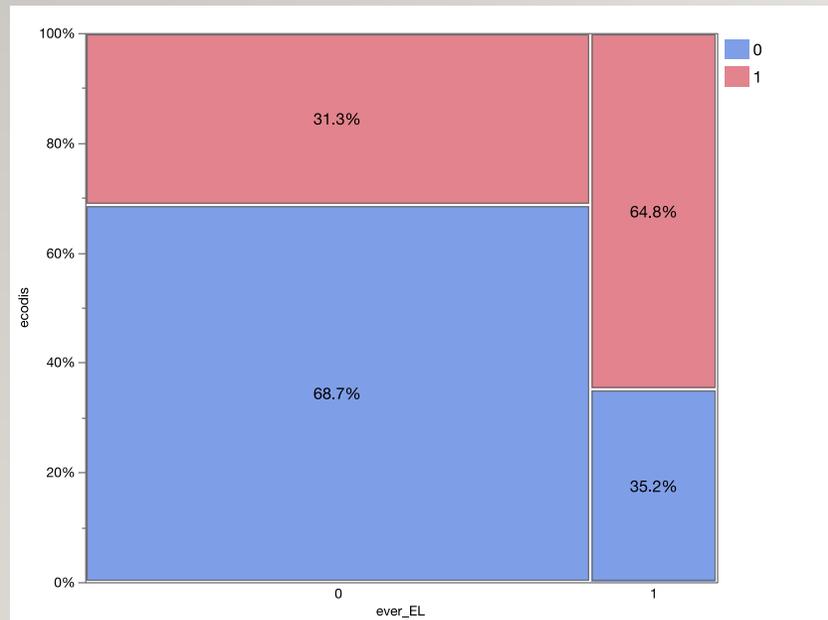
Econ.Dis.

Not Econ.Dis.

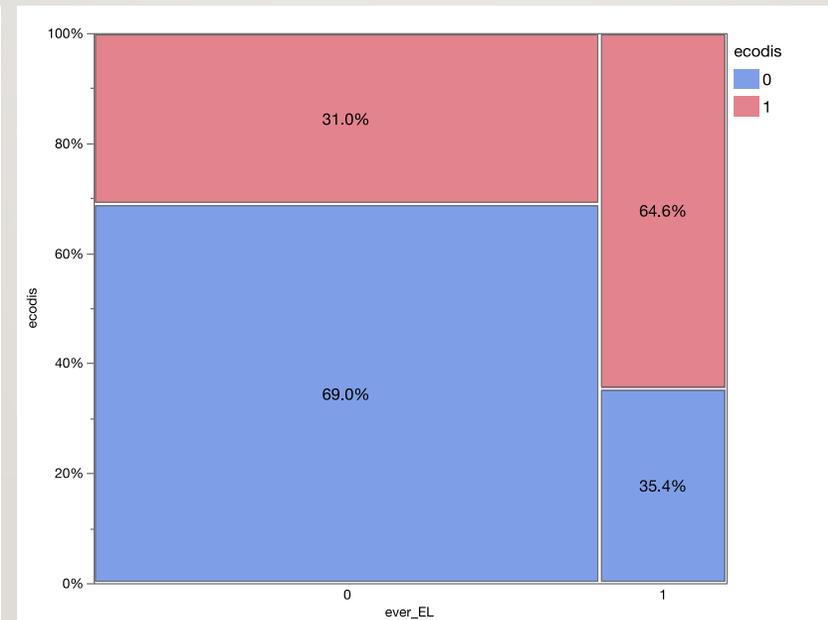
Grade 3

Grade 5

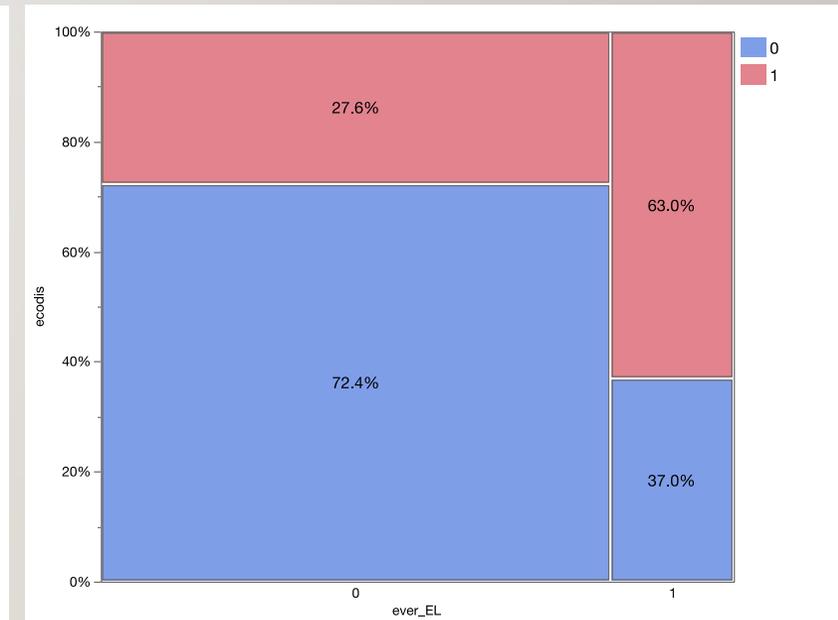
Grade 8



N = 69,343



N = 73,438



N = 72,356

Daily challenges

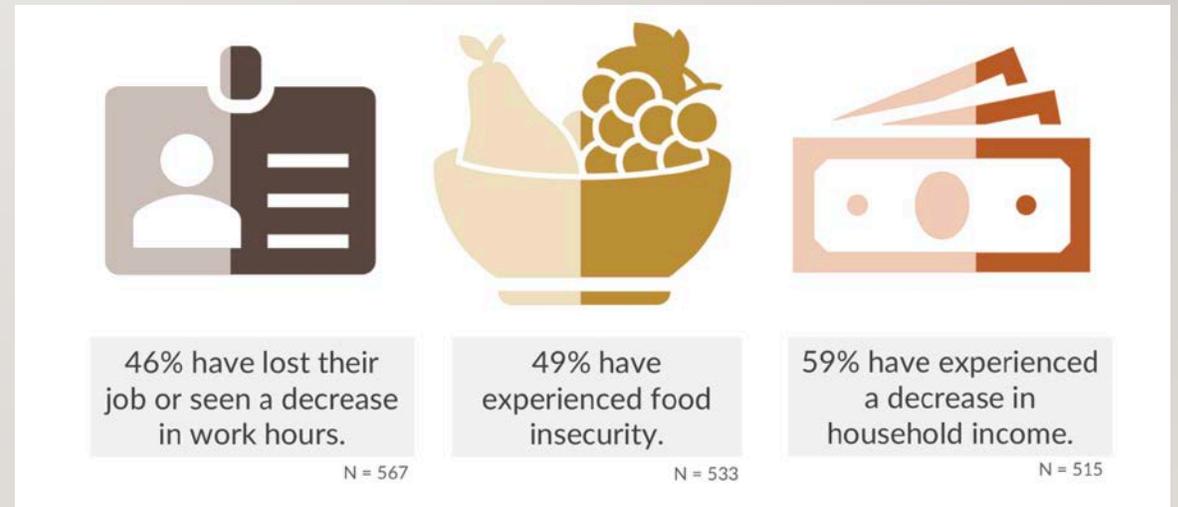
- Home environment being more financially uncertain or chaotic (Gelatt, 2020).



Food insecurity = a household's inability to provide enough food for every person to live an active, healthy life.

2020

54 million people
18 million children



Obstacles to instruction access and delivery

- In-home broadband adoption is lowest in communities with highest levels of poverty (Tomer, Fishbane, Siefer, & Callahan, 2020).
- Home environment being more financially uncertain or chaotic (Gelatt, 2020).
- 90% of teacher respondents reported “somewhat challenging” and “very challenging” to collaborate with parents to support learning at home (Unpublished Tulsa SEED data)

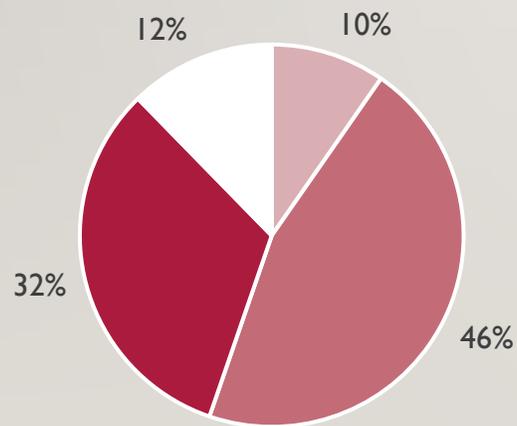
Increased
absenteeism

Increased dropout rates,
particularly for SIFE and
long-term ELs

Delivering instructions for ELs

- Remote learning lacks social interaction, which is important in second language learning (e.g., Verga & Kotz, 2013; Special issue co-edited by Glaser, Kupetz & You, 2019; Li & Jeong, 2020)
- Teachers mostly speak English only (Mesite, unpublished dissertation data, 2020).

Adapting remote/virtual instruction and assignments to students who are ELs (Unpublished Tulsa SEED data):



■ Not at all challenging

■ Somewhat challenging

■ Very challenging

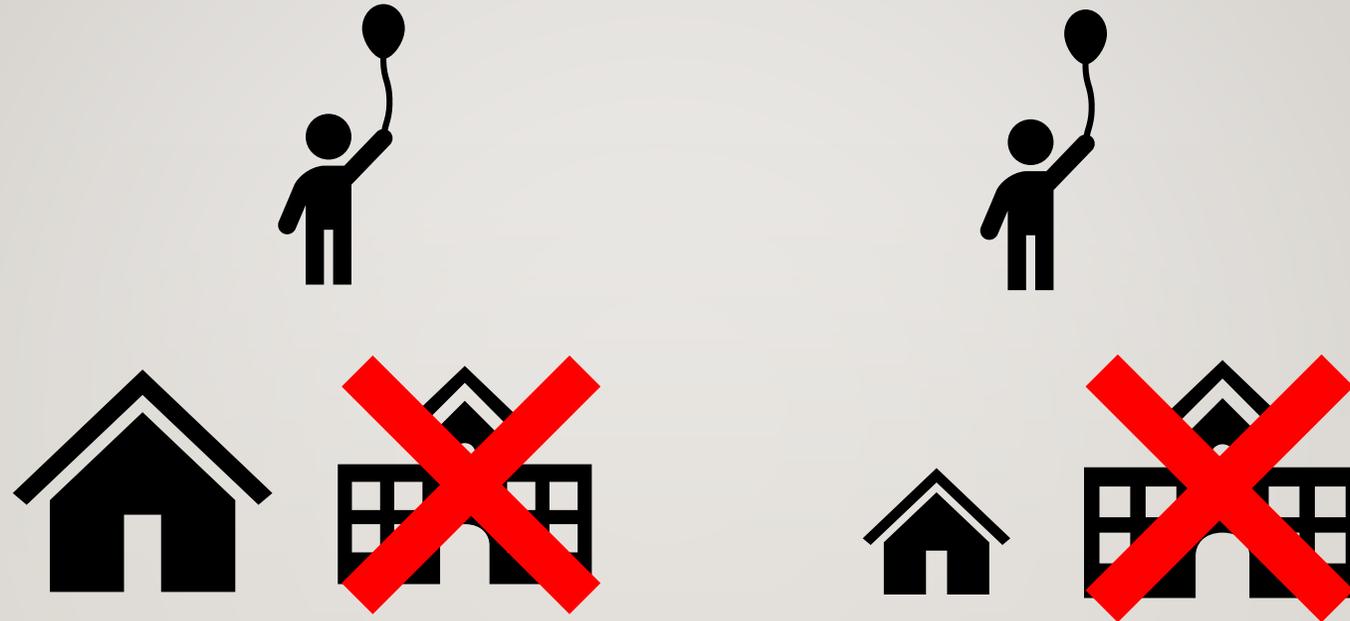
■ N/A

20% of teachers reported receiving guidance/support to provide accommodations for ELs.

Strengths of bilingual students

- Double challenge: Learning academic content through a developing, second language
- Language is the foundation of literacy
 - Stronger Spanish oral language skills predicted subsequent English language skills (Hammer et al., 2020; Marchman et al., 2020; Relyea & Amendum, 2019)
 - Metalinguistic awareness in Spanish predicted English reading skills (Kremin et al., 2019)
 - Computer-assisted vocabulary instruction in Spanish supports English vocabulary skills (Wood et al., 2018)
- Challenges:
 - Short-term: Providing equitable access to instructions, supporting educators
 - Short-term: Building relationship with families in the new school year without in-person interaction
 - Medium-term: Maintaining engagement through limited in-person schooling
 - Long-term: Paradigm-shifts in equitable assessments and teacher preparation

Equity in education



Equity in a system needs societal investment.
Shifting learning from school to home that relies
on family resources will exacerbate inequity.

THANK YOU!

TN study (Vanderbilt & TN-DOE): Min Hyun Oh, Adam Rollins, Colby Woods, Jeannette Mancilla-Martinez

The Tulsa SEED Study is funded by the Heising-Simons Foundation, the George Kaiser Family Foundation, the University Strategic Organization Initiative at the University of Oklahoma, the Foundation for Child Development, the Spencer Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The Tulsa SEED Study Team is led by PIs Drs. Anna Johnson and Deborah Phillips at Georgetown University, Dr. Diane Horm at University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, and Dr. Gigi Luk at McGill University. The Team also includes: Sherri Castle, April Dericks, Jane Hutchison, Dr. Anne Martin, Anne Partika, and Owen Schochet.



National Academy of Education COVID-19 and Inequities in Education Forum Series

Reading Instruction in the COVID-19 Era

Thank You!



Introduction

Based on the public health necessity presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, most U.S. schools closed their physical spaces in March 2020. Early evidence suggests that the closing of schools and migration to online learning has had harmful effects on children's academic performance. Research on so-called "summer loss" and on recovery from natural disasters (e.g. Hurricane Katrina) also shows that school disruption can slow academic progress and hamper social-emotional development of children. Moreover, the health crisis has surfaced for a broader public what many educators and policy makers have known for decades, namely growing disparities of resources and educational outcomes for historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underserved students. Historic inequities make it all the more important to focus attention not only on the near-term needs of America's 55 million public school students, but on whether and how the education system can continue the struggle for access and opportunity. The coincidence of COVID-19 with the everday American reckoning with anti-Black violence and racism puts the current and ongoing educational challenge to stark relief.

Separating short-term resilience and crisis management from mending the cleavages that require sustained long-term tenacity creates a false dichotomy; the imperative is to maintain a steady vision of systemic overhaul even as preparations are made for the coming academic year. Immediate decisions need to be framed in such a way as to prevent a return to "normal" from becoming an excuse to abandon the quest for disturbing what has been for too many children an unfair and destructive "normal."

The National Academy of Education (NAE) convened groups of scholars, policy leaders, and educators to address the fundamental question: how do we address educational inequities in the face of the COVID-19 emergency, a challenge made even more urgent in the context of the resurgent American crisis of racial justice.

Over a two-week period in July 2020, experts in reading, mathematics, and well-being (the latter signifying our intent to include more than academic achievement in discussions of the sources and remedies for educational inequality) wrestled with the following six questions:

1. What inequities in reading/mathematics/whole person well-being have been exacerbated by the pandemic?
2. What are the biggest challenges for addressing unfinished curricular learning in reading and mathematics instruction?
3. What strategies are you using/recommending/discussing that may be "best bets" for reading/mathematics learning?

Summary report available at
naeducation.org



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