



The Evolution of the AIM Package: Evidence and Lessons Learned from a Schoolwide Literacy Model Approach

Jade Wexler, Ph.D. March 27, 2025

Acknowledgements

- U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
- School partners







Agenda

- Background and the need for schoolwide literacy models
- Lessons learned from a schoolwide literacy model approach
- Indicators of promise and impact
- Resources
- Next steps
- Final Reflection



What this Presentation IS and IS NOT...

A story of lessons learned from a series of rigorous research studies

An overview of practices and resources

An opportunity to learn about and reflect on considerations for implementation

A detailed professional development session

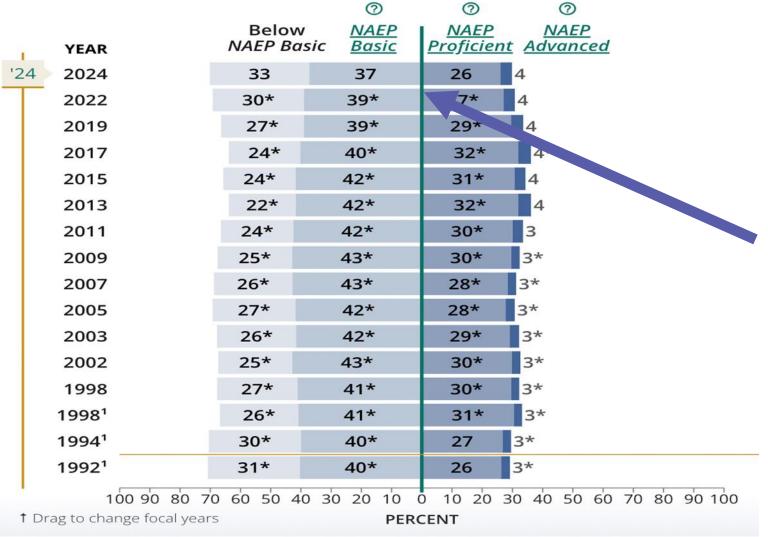
Going to get in the 'weeds'

www.aimcoaching.org www.meadowscenter.org



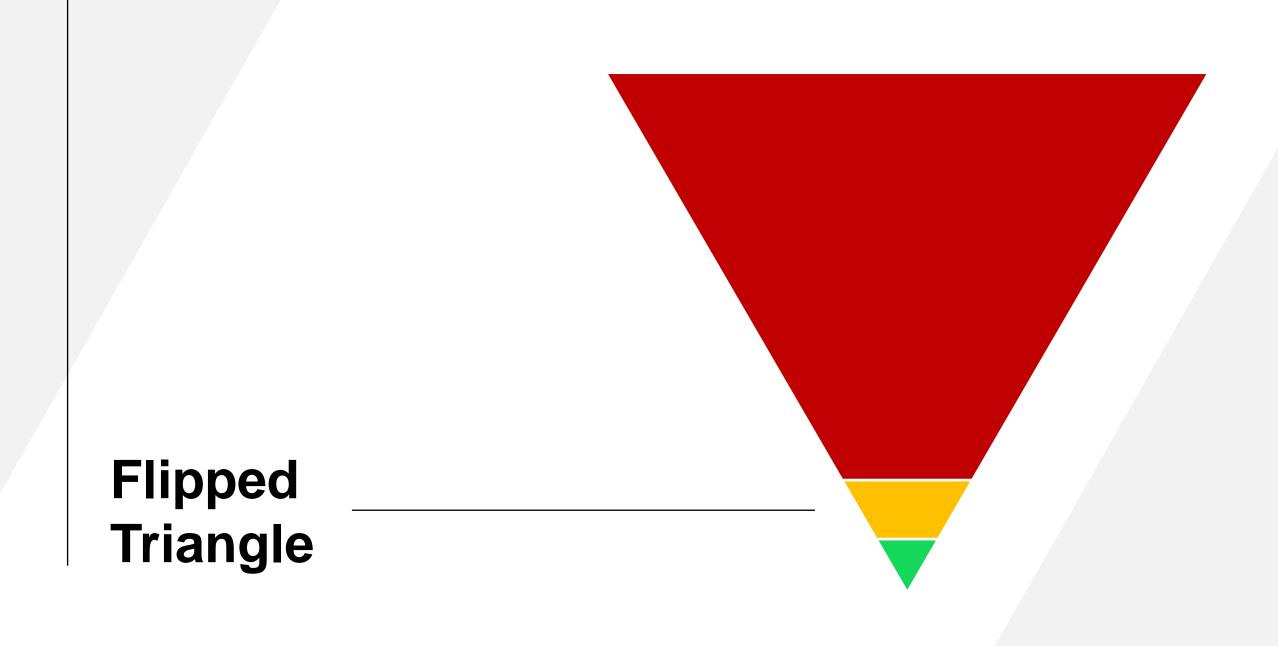
The Reality

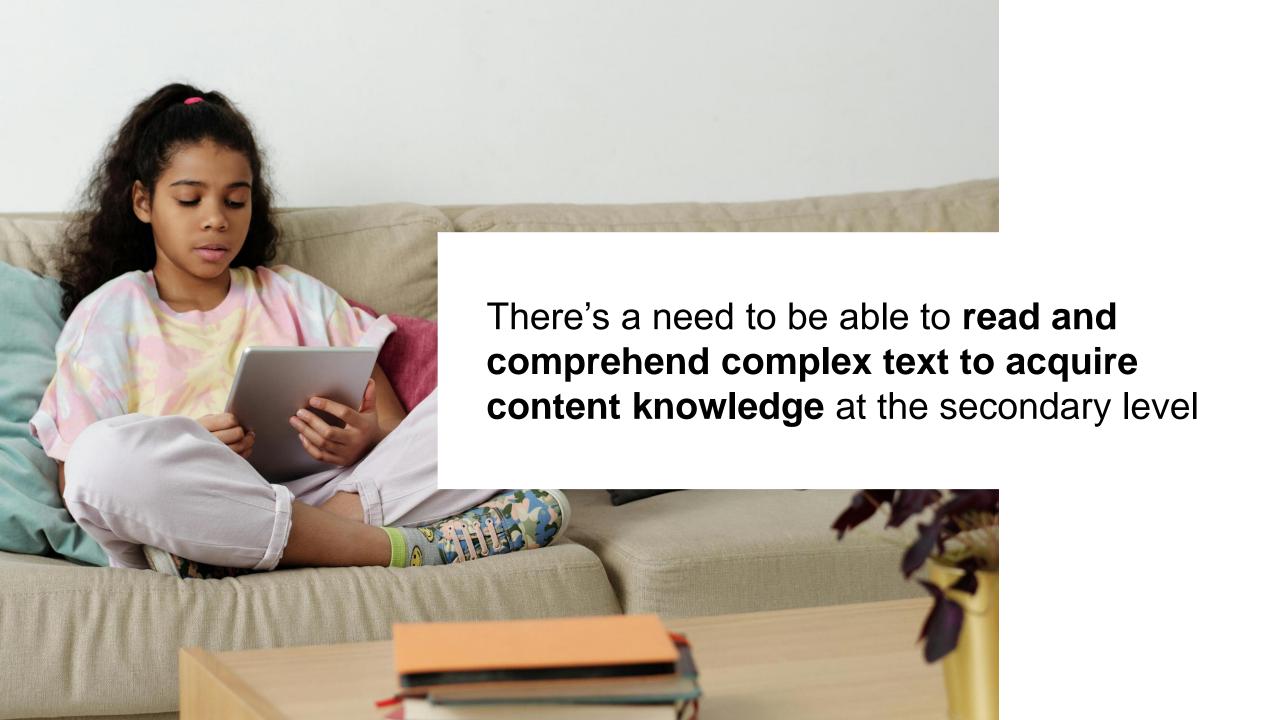
Many Middle School Students Struggle with Reading



NAEP Proficient

- locate information
- identify main idea
- identify order of events
- make simple inferences
- Identify one or both sides of an argument in informational text
- interpret meaning
 of a word as it is
 used in text









School-Wide Literacy Model Approach: Providing for Struggling Readers in an Efficient Way





Guidance from the Institute of Education Sciences

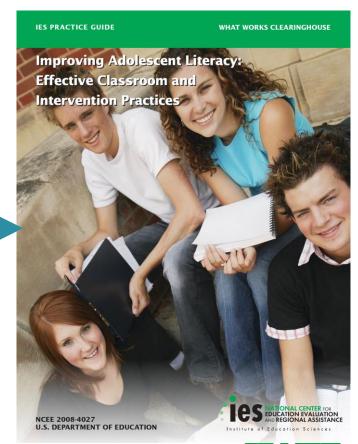
U.S. Department of Education

Institute of Education Sciences

Research arm of the U.S. DOE

Independent and Non-Partisan

Mission: Provide scientific evidence on which to ground education practice.





IES Recommendations Based on Strong or Moderate Scientific Evidence

Provide explicit vocabulary instruction

Strong

Modeling and Guided Practice

Provide explicit comprehension

"They always tell us to get the main idea but no one ever shows us—how do you [actually] get the main idea?"

Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning

Moderate

Make available intensive interventions for struggling readers.

Strong

Corrective Feedback

Guidance from the Institute of Education Sciences

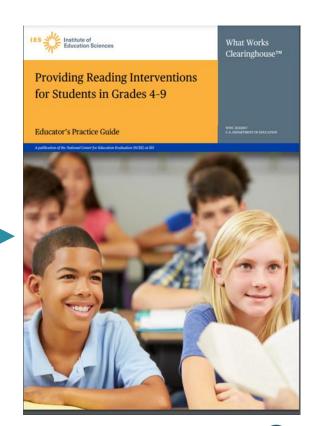
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IES Recommendations Based on Strong or Moderate Scientific Evider Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9 (2022)



Build students decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words

Strong

Provide fluency-building activities to help students read effortlessly

Strong

Routinely use a set of comprehensionbuilding practices to help students make sense of text

Strong

Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of stretch text.

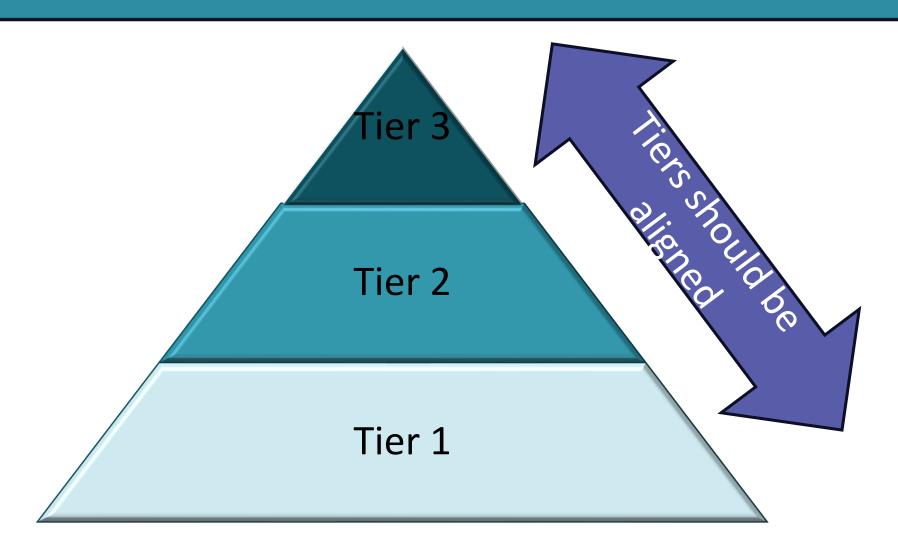
Moderate

Modeling and Guided Practice

Opportunities to Respond and Practice

Corrective Feedback

Alignment Between Tiers of Support





Example: Alignment Between Tiers



Evidence-Based Comprehension Building Practices

Tier 1

Science



Social Studies



1 ELA



Topics & Texts Tiers 2/3
Increase
dosage/
intensity
[and don't
forget word
study]



A Schoolwide Literacy Model Approach

- Phase I: PACT (IES)
- Phase II: PACT Plus (OSEP)
- Phase III: AIM Coaching (IES)
- Phase IV: The AIM Package (OSEP)

Phase I: PACT

US History; 8th grade; unit-based content approach

Comprehension Canopy	Essential Words	Critical Reading	Team-Based Learning
Building background knowledge	Building vocabulary knowledge	Facilitating text comprehension through reading and text-based discussion	Comprehension ChecksKnowledge Acquisition

Vaughn et al. 2013; 2015

Content Approach to Reading Instruction

Characterizes written content as the vehicle for instruction, engaging students in building coherent representations of the ideas presented in print.

Construction-Integration Model (Kintsch, 1998) operationalizes this approach

- Students read text to construct and link understandings
- Integrate these new ideas from text with previously learned content (their prior knowledge)

Instructionally

Includes a focus on discourse about text





Comprehension Canopy Routine 7–10 minutes

Materials

Video: "America, the Story of Us: Life in Jamestown"

Introduction and Prior Knowledge

What do you already know about colonial America?

Discuss student answers.

In this unit, we will learn about the English settlement of North America, a time called "colonial America." These years begin with the first attempts to establish English colonies in America and end with three distinct colonial regions: the New England colonies, the middle colonies, and the southern colonies. In this unit, we will ask these questions: "How were these regions different?" and "What caused them to develop differently?"

Springboard

Introduce the video.

This video is about the first English settlers in America. It will prepare you to learn more about why these settlers made the decision to go to America, even when they knew they would face grave danger.

· Provide a purpose for viewing the video.

As you watch the video, think about three things: (1) What were some reasons people immigrated to the Americas? (2) What was life like in colonial America? and, finally, (3) Why do you think the colonies developed so differently?

- Show the video.
- · Prompt students to begin a "turn and talk" activity.

Would you ever leave your hometown? Why? What were some reasons people immigrated to the Americas?



Essential Word Colonial America

colony

Land and communities controlled by a distant country



Related Words: settlement, dependent

Example Usage:

American colonies were required to follow the laws of England. Because the colonies were so far away, these laws were difficult to enforce.

Example: Rhode Island in 1670 Nonexample: Rhode Island in 2013

Turn and Talk:

Colonies are dependent on their mother countries for safety and money. Who are you dependent on? Talk about a time when you wanted more independence from this person.

I of 2 Colonial America • Lesson 2

Visions of the New World

(1)

JAMESTOWN, 1607: THE FIRST MONTHS

Our men were destroyed with cruel diseases, such as swellings, fluxes, burning fevers, and by wars. Some departed suddenly, but for the most part they died of mere famine. There were never Englishmen left in a foreign country in such misery as we were in this new discovered Virginia. Our food was but a small can of barley sod in water, to five men a day. Our drink was cold water taken out of the river, which was at a flood very salty, at a low tide full of slime and filth, which was the destruction of many of our men. Thus we lived for five months in this miserable distress. If it had not pleased God to have put a terror in the savages' hearts, we would have all perished by those wild and cruel pagans, being as weak as we were. To hear the pitiful murmurings and outcries of our sick men without relief, every night and day, for six weeks would make one's heart bleed. Some departed out of the world, many times three or four men in a night. In the morning, their bodies trailed out of their cabins like dogs to be buried. In this sort did I see the mortality of diverse of our people.

What is happening in Jamestown?

What does this text show us about life in the earliest colony?

(2

JAMESTOWN, 1609–1610: STARVING TIME

Now for all of us at Jamestown, beginning to feel that sharp prick of hunger which no man can truly describe, a world of miseries followed. Some, to satisfy their hunger, have robbed the store, for which I caused them to be executed. Some, having fed upon horses and other beasts as long

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These materials were developed with funding from the Institute for Education Sciences, R305F00013, to The University of Texas at Austin. The materials were developed by embers of the Promoting Adolescents' Comprehension of Texx (PACT) Research Teams from The University of Texas at Austin, Florida State University, and Texas A&M University.

"Visions of the New World" • 2 of 2

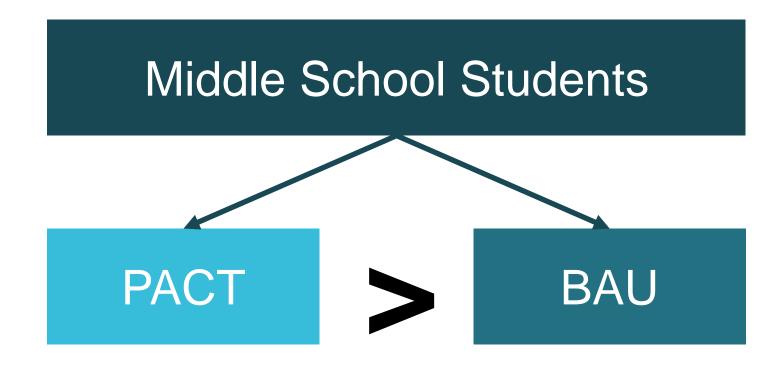
Colonial America • Lesson 2

as they lasted, were glad to make shift with vermin as dogs, cats, rats, and mice. Some were forced to search the woods and to feed upon serpents and snakes, where many of our men were cut off of and slain by the savages. And now, famine beginning to look so ghastly and pale in every face, nothing was spared to maintain life.

Adapted from Tyler, L. G. (Ed.). (1907). Narratives of early Virginia, 1606–1625. New York, NY: Scribner's. Full text available at http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/jamestown-browsemod/id=|1063

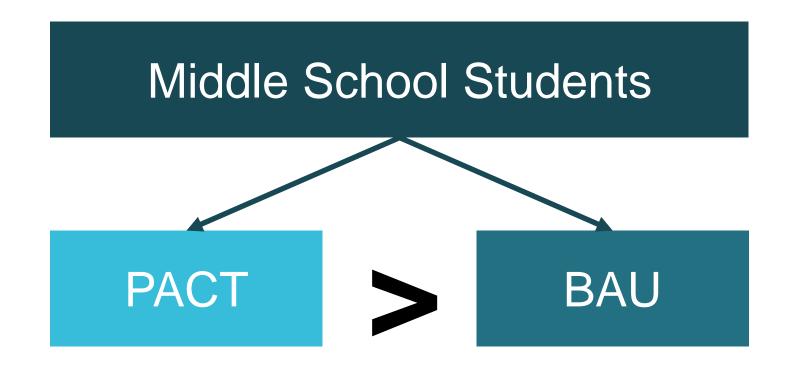
į	How are the colonists feeling?		
i			
i			
i	Handara the considered of the relative control with what they had considered		
	How does the experience of the colonists contrast with what they had expected?		
i			
	After reading this passage, what is one thing that you wonder?		
1			
į			

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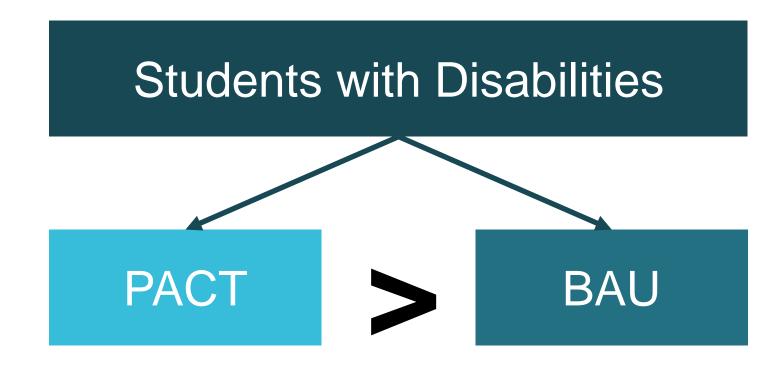
Content Knowledge
Content Area Reading Comprehension
General Reading Comprehension

Vaughn et al., 2013



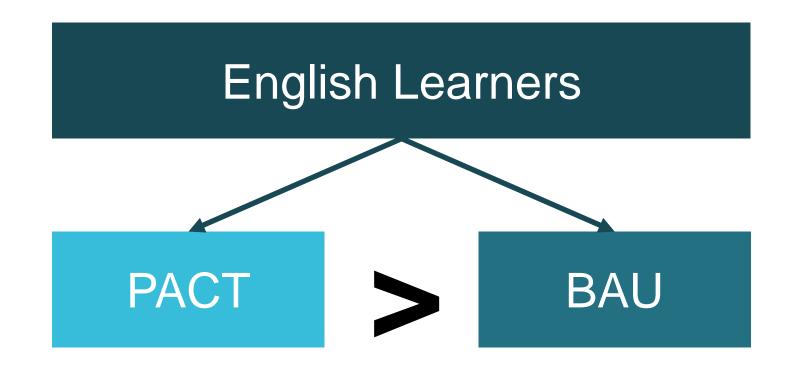
Content Knowledge
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Vaughn et al., 2015



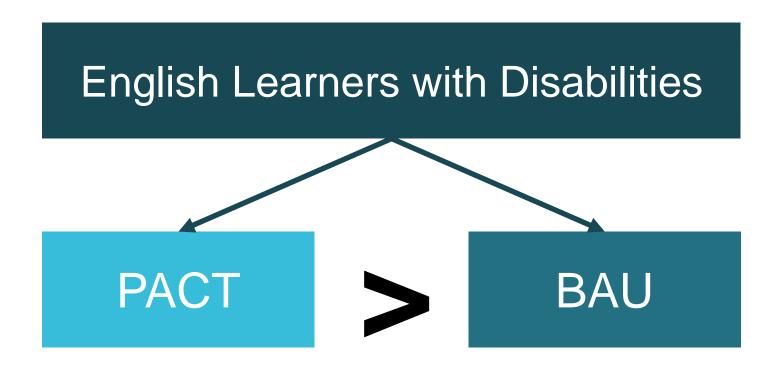
Content Knowledge
Content Area Reading Comprehension

Swanson et al., 2015



Content Knowledge
Content Area Reading Comprehension

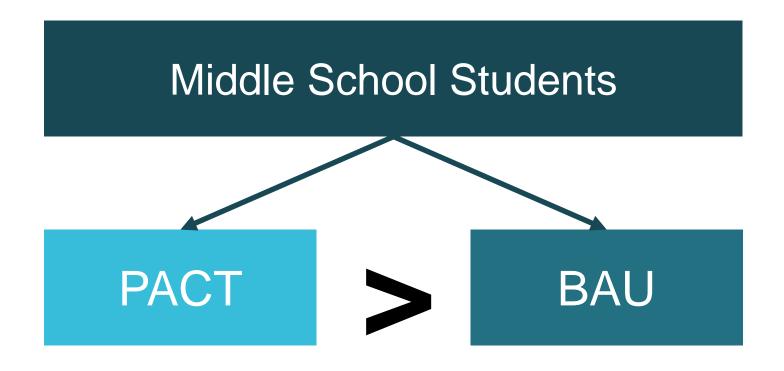
Vaughn et al., 2017



Content Knowledge
Content Area Reading Comprehension

Wanzek et al., 2016

PACT Effectiveness

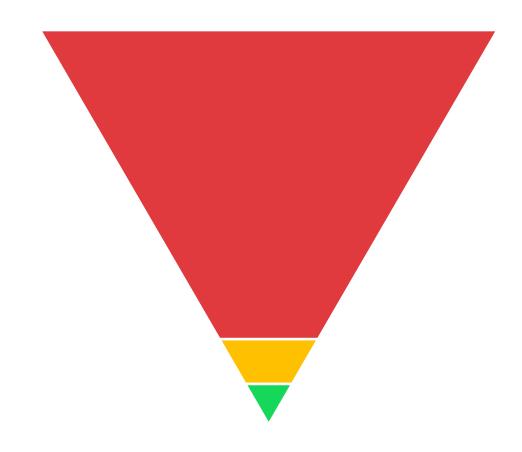


Content Knowledge
Content Area Reading Comprehension

Roberts et al., 2023

Phase II: PACT Plus

How can we extend PACT beyond social studies?





PACT Plus Practices

Content and curriculum agnostic; text-based

Comprehension Canopy	Essential Words	Critical Reading
Building background knowledge	Building vocabulary knowledge	Facilitating text comprehension through reading and text-based discussion

Implementation Summary

Sustaining Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of...

The Practices

- simple
- routine-like
- allowed for 'customization'

The Students

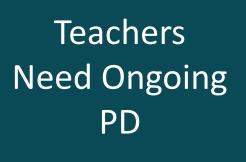
- the practices are beneficial for many students
- some would have benefitted from some more intensive/explicit instruction

The School Level Supports

- Admin prioritized and ensured effectiveness
- coaching was helpful but not 'enough' to address teachers' varying skill and will needs

Wexler et al. (2022)

Identifying a Need





Instructional Coaches are Stretched Thin

Coaching model that tailors activities to teachers' needs in a way that maximizes coaching time



Phase III: AIM Coaching

IES:

To evaluate AIM Coaching under rigorous research conditions—with a focus on promise of effectiveness

(Wexler, Swanson, & Roberts)

www.aimcoaching.org



Year 1 Multi-Survey Study Year 2
Design & Pilot Testing

Year 3
Pilot RCT

Year 4
Sustainability

Jade Wexler Ph.D., Pl



Yang Fu GRA



Jamie Smith GRA



Anne Murphy Karabell GRA

University of Texas at Austin





Blair Payne, BCBA **GRA**

Other Investigators & Former **Collaborators**

Karen Omohundro

Doctoral Candidate,

Project Director



Alexandra Shelton, Ph.D. Investigator, former Project Director



Robin Sayers, Ph.D.



Kristabel Stark, Ph.D.



Nancy Scammacca Lewis, Ph.D.



Elizabeth

Swanson

Ph.D., Co-PI

Erin Hogan, Ph.D.

Methodologists

Advisory Board

Advisory Board & Methodologists



Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D. University of Texas



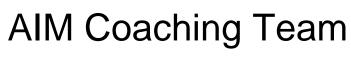
Mary Brownell, Ph.D. University of Florida



Greg Roberts, Ph.D. University of Texas



Anna Mari Fall. Ph.D. University of Texas





Julianna Kim, Ph.D.



Tara Burke Johnson, Ph.D.

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More Intensive Explicit Instruction Options

The Integration of Strategy Instruction: Get the Gist with Gist Pointers



PACT Plus Practices

Content and curriculum agnostic; text-based

Comprehension Canopy	Essential Words	Critical Reading
Building background knowledge	Building vocabulary knowledge	Facilitating text comprehension through reading and text-based discussion

Reading Rope

Reading is a multifaceted skill, gradually acquired over years of instruction and practice.

LINGUISTIC COMPREHENSION

Background Knowledge

Vocabulary Knowledge

Language Knowledge

Verbal Reasoning

Literacy Knowledge

SKILLED READING

Fluent coordination of word reading and comprehension processes

WORD RECOGNITION

Phonemic Awareness

Decoding (and Spelling)

Sight Recognition



Scarborough,



PACT Plus Practices in AIM Coaching

Content and curriculum agnostic; text-based

Comprehension Canopy	Essential Words	Critical Reading
Building background knowledge	Building vocabulary knowledge	Facilitating text comprehension through reading and text-based discussion and get the gist

Embedded Explicit Strategy Instruction Option

Get the Gist Cue Card

Step 1 – Answer: Who or what is this section mostly about?

- Is anyone or anything mentioned most frequently?
- Be sure to check pronouns, pictures, captions, and headings.

Step 2 – Answer: What is the most important information about the who or what?

- What information relates to the:
 - o who or what,
 - o culminating question, and/or
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Step 3 – Write a gist statement.

- Be sure your statement identifies:
 - o the most important who or what and
 - the most important information about the who or what.
- Be sure your statement is short but complete with:
 - o a capital letter,
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Wha	t is happenin	g in Jamesto	own?			
Wha	t <mark>does t</mark> his to	ext show us	about life in	the earliest o	colony?	
				505055555		

2)

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Model Get the Gist

The Venus flytrap is an insect-eating plant that lives mostly on the East Coast. Found primarily in swampy parts of the United States, like North and South Carolina, the Venus flytrap has colorful pink and green hues. Like most other plants, Venus flytrap get some nutrients from the soil, but since swampy areas tend to have soil that is nutrient-poor, it is hard for the plant to get nutrients from there. As a result, the flytrap has evolved to not only rely on the soil to survive. The Venus flytrap is a carnivorous plant because it catches insects and eats them to get the nutrients that it can't get from the soil.

Section 1			
Who/What?	Most Important Information		
Venus flytrap			
Gist Statement			



Model Get the Gist

The Venus flytrap is an <u>insect-eating plant</u> that lives mostly on the East Coast. Found primarily in <u>swampy parts</u> of the United States, like North and South Carolina, the Venus flytrap has colorful pink and green hues. Like most other plants, Venus flytraps get some nutrients from the soil, but since swampy areas tend to have soil that is <u>nutrient-poor</u>, it is hard for the plant to get nutrients from there. As a result, the flytrap has evolved to not only rely on the soil to survive. The Venus flytrap is a carnivorous plant because it catches insects and <u>eats them to get the nutrients</u> that it can't get from the soil.

Section 1			
Who/What? Most Important Information			
	Eats insects to get nutrients		
Vanue flytran	Lives in swamps		
Venus flytrap	Gets little nutrients from soil		
	Gist Statement		
The Venus flytrap eats insects because it gets few nutrients from soil.			



Partner Reading Get the Gist Cue Card

Step 1 - Read the section.

- Partner 1 reads the section.
- Partner 2 follows along.

Step 2 - Get the gist.

- Partner 1: Who or what is this section mostly about?
- Partner 2: I think this section is mostly about _____.
- Partners discuss.
- Partner 2: What is the most important information about the who or what?
- Partner 1: I think the most important information is
- Partners discuss.
- Write the gist statement.

Step 3 - Repeat Steps 1 and 2.

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The Students

- the practices are beneficial for many students
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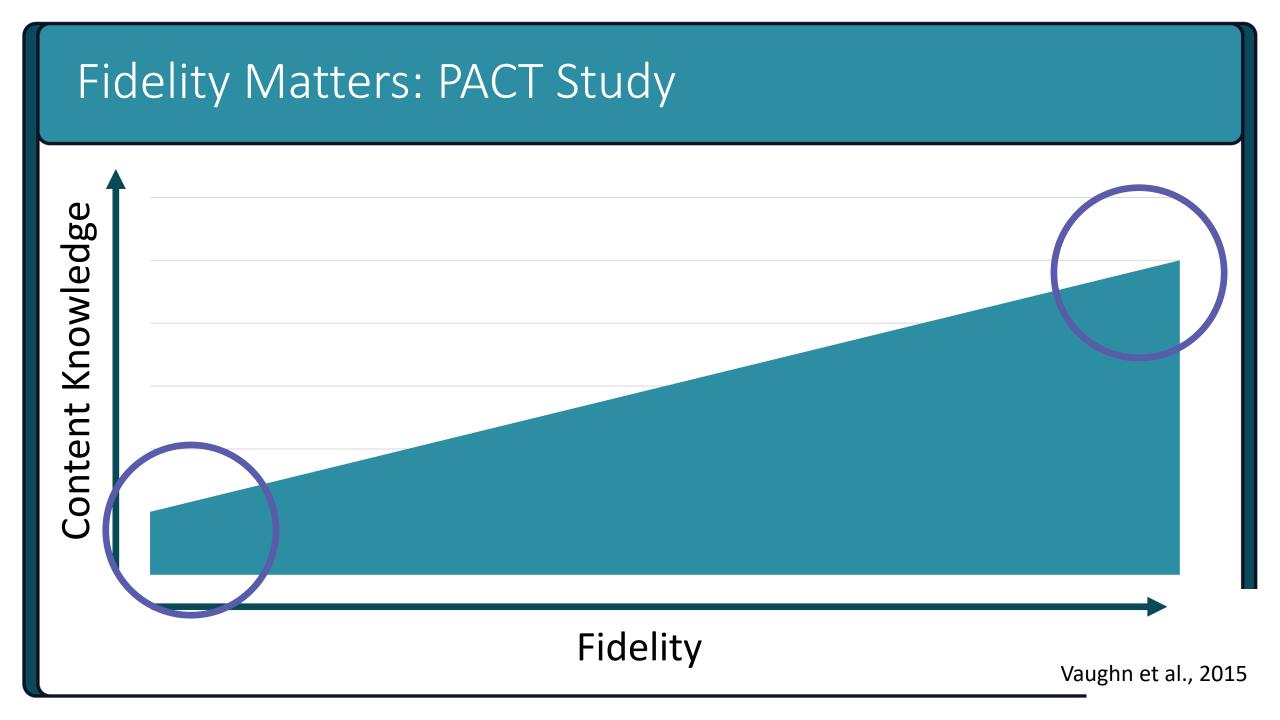
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Fidelity with Allowable Customization

Negotiables and Non-Negotiables



Tension Between Fidelity and Students' Needs

EDUCATION OPINION

Why Is Fidelity Always Seen as the New Four-Letter Word?

By George Toman — January 05, 2020 (6 min read



BUT Let's Consider This....

- How **practitioners** perceive and implement an intervention provides **valuable insight** into its potential acceptability, feasibility, usability, and sustainability (Harn, et al., 2013; Rademaker, et al., 2021).
- Some adaptations may even increase the efficacy of the intervention (Castro, Barrera, & Martinez, 2004; Webster-Stratton et al., 2011).



Fidelity Accounting for Students' Needs

Fidelity

Fidelity and Students' Needs

Students'
Needs



Pacing

Minute	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5		Comprehension			
J		Canopy			
10		Essential			
10		Words			
15					
20					
25		CR Sections 1-4			
30		+ Culminating Question			
35					
40					
45					



Minute	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5	Comprehension Canopy	CR Section 2	CR Section 3	CR Section 4 +	
10	Essential Words			Culminating Question	
15	CR Section 1			Q	
20					
25					
30					
35					
40					
45					



PACTive Ingredients

Practice	Non-Negotiables	Negotiables – when appropriate
Comprehension Canopy	Provides background information necessary to comprehend the text Keep it short	Uses springboard format other than visual; Facilitates turn and talk with small groups vs pairs
Essential Words	Teaches 1-2 words Keep it short	Does not use EW organizer; Does not include non- example
Critical Reading	Facilitates comprehension and content acquisition	Uses an explicit instruction continuum based on data

coaching

Embedded Explicit Strategy Instruction Option

Get the Gist Cue Card

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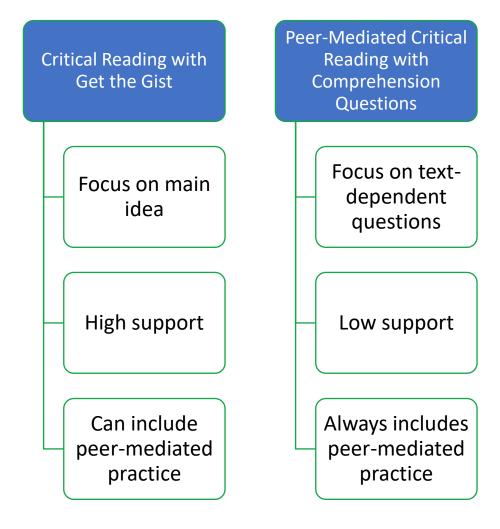
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Two Options for Critical Reading





Critical Reading: An Explicit Instruction Continuum

Strategy Instruction Approach: Get the Gist Content Approach: Comprehension Questions Overt use of Lower-order Covert use of Higher-order Get the Gist (e.g., literal Get the Gist (e.g., with gist questions) inferential without gist pointers and pointers and questions) a graphic a graphic organizer organizer Whole-Teacher Peer-mediated instruction

modeling

class

Sample Progression for Critical Reading

Critical Reading with Get the Gist

- Gist pointers
- Graphic organizer

Critical Reading with Get the Gist

Peer-Mediated
Critical Reading with
Comprehension
Questions

Critical Reading with Get the Gist

Graphic organizer

Peer-Mediated
Critical Reading with
Get the Gist



Sample Progression for Critical Reading

Critical Reading with Get the Gist

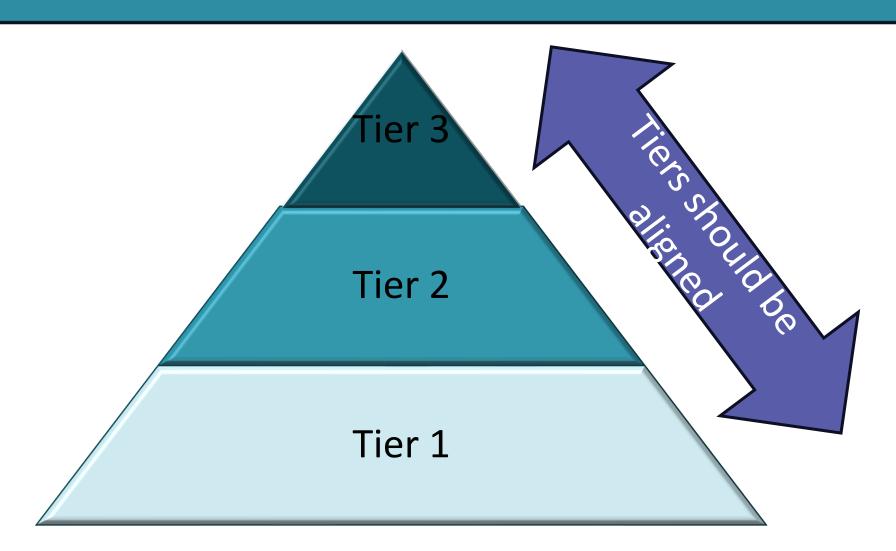
- Gist pointers
- Graphic organizer

Peer-Mediated
Critical Reading with
Comprehension
Questions

Peer-Mediated Critical Reading with Get the Gist



AND, remember this...





Sentence-Level Gist

Get the Gist Steps

- 1. Answer: Who or what is this section mostly about?
- 2. Answer: What is the most important information about the who or what?

3. Write a gist statement.

Sentence-Level Gist Steps

- 1. Identify who or what **each sentence** is mostly about. Think about pronouns!
- 2. Select **2 important words** about the who or what from each sentence.
- 3. Identify the most important who or what and the most important words about the who or what to write a gist statement.

Sentence-Level Gist

Fred Korematsu was born on January 30, 1919, in Oakland, California. He is best known for being a civil rights activist. Growing up, Fred faced racism. Many people in the United States looked down on people of Asian descent and thought they were inferior. After graduating from high school, Fred worked at a shipyard. Then when he snowed up to work one day, he was fired because of his Japanese ancestry.

Sentence-Level Gist

	Section 1				
Sentence	Who/What	Two Important Words			
1	Fred Korematsu	born 1919			
2	He (Fred Korematsu)	civil rights activist			
3	<mark>Fred</mark>	faced racism			
4	Asian	thought inferior			
5	Fred	worked shipyard			
6	He (Fred Korematsu)	fired → Japanese			
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					

Gist Statement

Fred Korematsu was a Japanese American civil rights activist who experienced racism.



Making data-based decisions: How do I know students are demonstrating proficiency?

Consider students':

- Annotations related to gist pointers or comprehension questions
- Graphic organizers (i.e., gist statements, responses to culminating questions)
- Written answers to comprehension questions
- Responses during text-based discussions
- Performance related to PACT Plus in other classes
- Reading assessment data



Data-Based Decision Making: Movement Through the Continuum (Example)

Section 5: Superstar of Science

Chimpanzees are our closest relatives. And nobody knows that better than Jane Goodall.

As a young woman, Goodall went to the jungles of Tanzania, a country in Africa, to study chimpanzees. At first, the chimps ran away whenever she was nearby. Eventually, the chimps learned to trust her.

Goodall discovered that chimps use tools, such as twigs, to "fish" for bugs. At the time, scientists thought only humans used tools.

Today, chimps are in danger of dying out. She works to save them and their habitat. "The least I can do is speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves," Goodall says.

- Be sure your statement identifies:
 - o the most important who or what and
 - the most important information about the who or what.
- Be sure your statement includes:
 - o a capital letter,
 - o a period, and
 - o approximately 10 words.

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Jane Goodall is an expert on chimps and tries to save them.

- 1. The main idea is that Goodall went to Africa to study chimps
- 2. Chimpanzees are reletives of humans
- 3. The main Idea is that she was in Africa
- 4. She loved chimps.
- 5. a young woman Goodall gos to habitat.
- 6. about animals

Data-Based Decision Making



Who/what errors

- Unspecific subject ("woman" instead of "Jane Goodall")
- Missing subject ("studied chimps" instead of "Jane Goodall studied chimps")
- Incorrect subject

Most important information errors

- No detail provided
- Supporting detail ("Jane Goodall went to Africa")
- Extraneous detail ("Jane Goodall loved monkeys" not in the text)

Plagiarism errors



Implementation Summary

Sustaining Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of...

The Practices

- simple
- routine-like
- allowed for 'customization'

The Students

- the practices are beneficial for many students
- some would have benefitted from some more intensive/explicit instruction

The School Level Supports

- Admin prioritized and ensured effectiveness
- coaching was helpful but not 'enough' to address teachers' varying skill and will needs

Wexler et al. (2022)

Identifying a Need

Teachers need ongoing PLO



- Lack of coaches
- Stretched thin
- Lack of guidance

Coaching model that:

- Tailors activities to teachers' needs
- Maximizes coaching time
- Allows for customization of the model



AIM Coaching

IES:

To evaluate AIM Coaching under rigorous research conditions—with a focus on promise of effectiveness

(Wexler, Swanson, & Roberts)

www.aimcoaching.org



Year 1 Multi-Survey Study Year 2
Design & Pilot Testing

Year 3
Pilot RCT

Year 4
Sustainability

How is AIM Coaching Unique?

Data-Based

 Use teachers' skill and will data to guide coaching decisions Systematic

 Follow structured guidelines to differentiate support Efficient

Less support for some = more time for others

Coaching Model Development Barriers and Solutions



Barriers:

Solutions:

- Lack of coaches in middle schools
- Coaching across content-areas is hard
- Coaches had minimal literacy knowledge

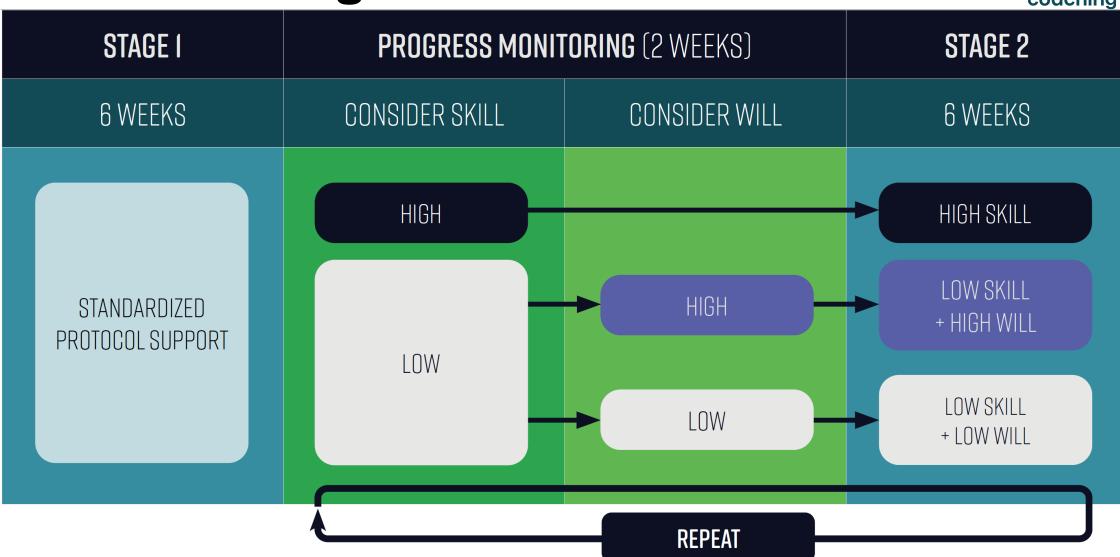
- Allowed for a team of coaches
- Coaching PLC sessions supporting customizable coaching model
- Reinforced with online modules







AIM Coaching Model



Indicators of Promise and Impact: Phase III and Phase IV

AIM Coaching Findings The Scale-Up The Spread

Phase III: AIM Coaching Pilot Study

- School-level randomization to allow for model implementation
- Focused on feasibility, teacher outcomes, and student outcomes

Random Assignment of Schools (n = 7) 947 6th grade students 39 teachers

Comparison:
(n = 4)

PACT Plus + BAU Coaching
14 BAU coaches



Teacher Outcomes

PACT Plus Fidelity

AIM Coaching*



BAU

Content Area Lit Instruction Self Efficacy

AIM Coaching



BAU

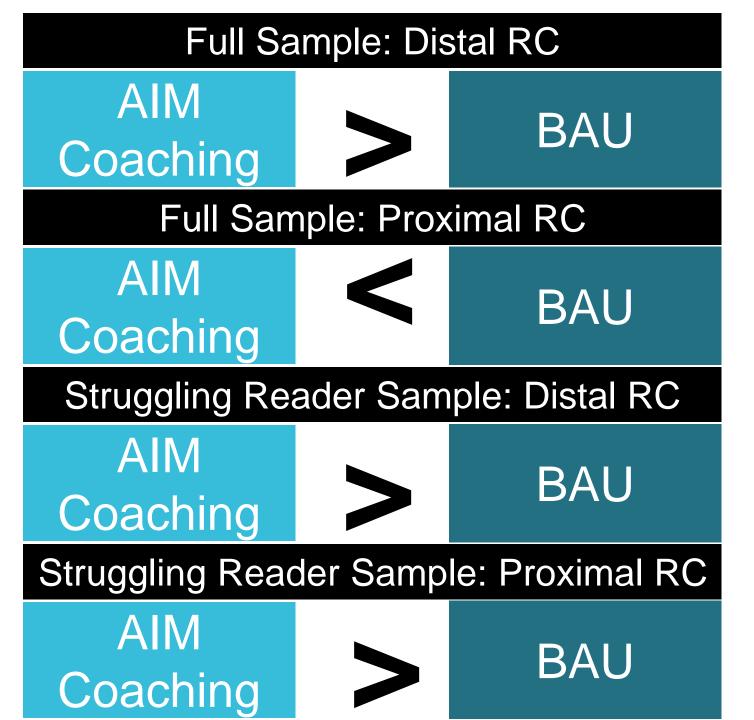
Content Area Lit Instruction Collective Efficacy

AIM Coaching



BAU

Student Outcomes



Phase IV: AIM Package Model Demonstration Project

Intensive Responsive Sustainability





Coach and Teacher Outcomes

AIM Coaching Fidelity

Moderate-High

PACT Plus Fidelity

Moderate

Student Outcomes

Full Sample: Distal RC

AIM Package*

g = 0.39

Full Sample: Proximal RC

AIM Package*

g = 0.37

Struggling Reader Sample: Distal RC

AIM Package*

g = 0.70

Struggling Reader Sample: Proximal RC

AIM Package*

g = 0.49

Student Outcomes

Full Sample: CALSEM

AIM Package

g = 0.04

Struggling Reader Sample: CALSEM

AIM Package*

g = 0.47

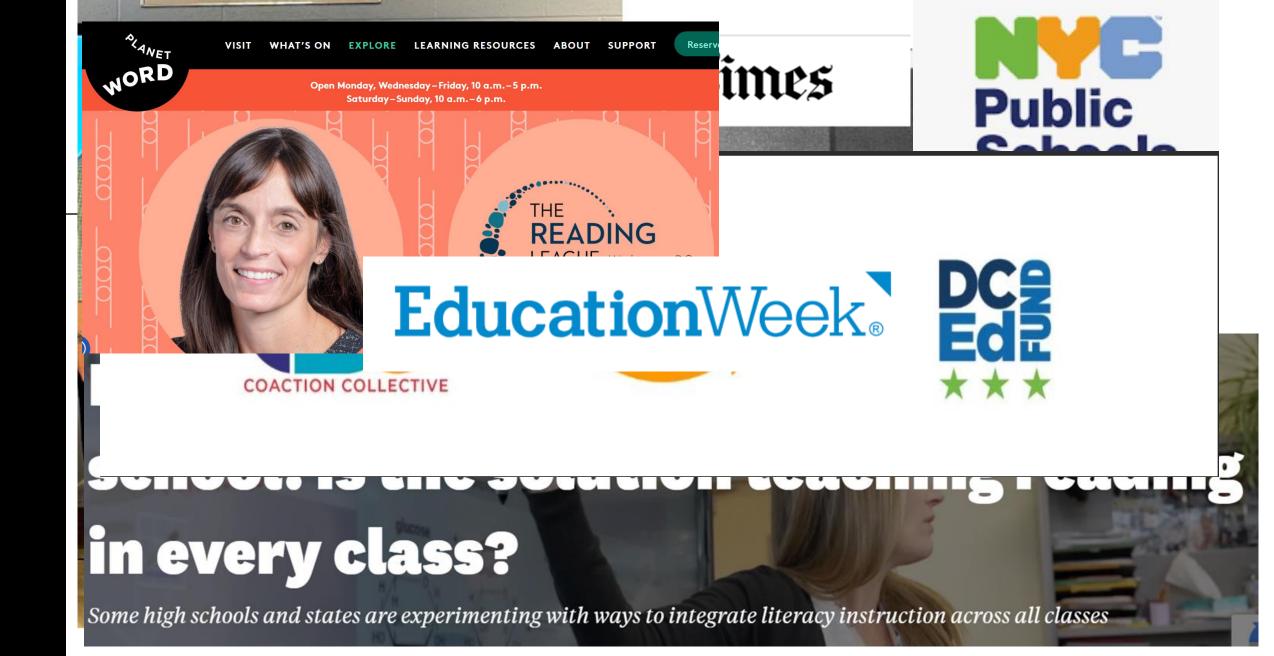
Established Evidence of Generalizability

Diffusion Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003)

- District has required PACT Plus training district-wide
- Co-implemented training and integrated our online modules into their own learning management system (i.e., Canvas)
- Creating materials such as lessons plans and pacing guides
- Beginning to explore implementation of AIM Coaching

13 High

GES



Resources





This work was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education (grant R324A200012) and the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education (model demonstration H326M200015) to University of Maryland and The University of Texas at Austin. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the U.S. Department of Education.





WHAT IS AIM COACHING? MEET THE TE



WHAT IS AIM COACHING?

MEET THE TEAM

RESOURCES

PROJECTS FUNDED



Next Steps

Development and Innovation: Project PACT+ AI

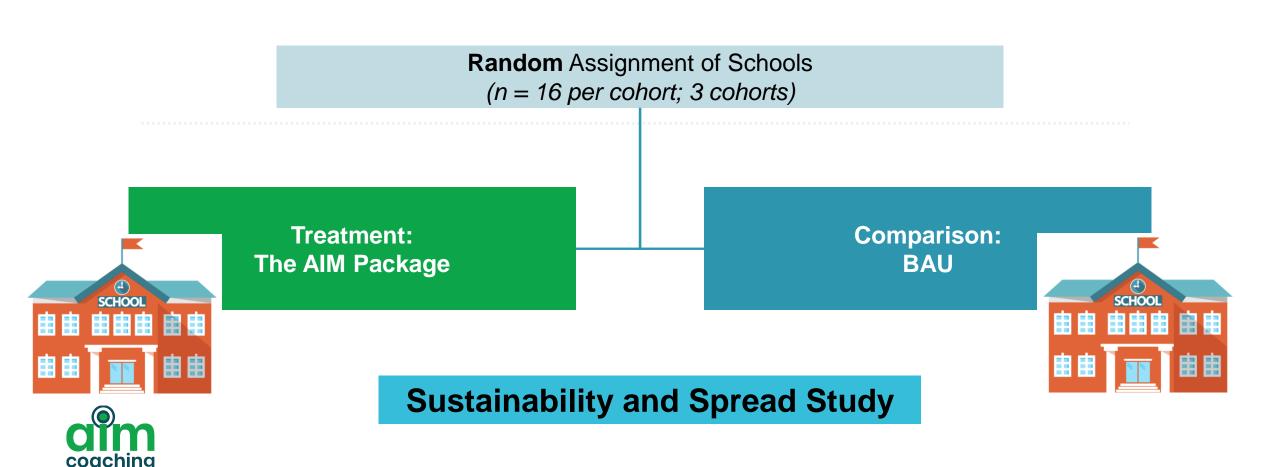
Impact: The ImPACT of the AIM Package

PACT+AI (Wexler, Swanson, Ai, & Roberts, in review!)

Solution for Planning

Solution for Data-based Decision Making

The ImPACT of The AIM Package (Wexler, Swanson, & Roberts, in review!)





Final Reflection

Jawexler@umd.edu





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